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1800

# RETURN OF THE FAIRIES

BY

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*ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES W. REED*

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LITTLE FOLKS PUBLISHING COMPANY

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

C. J. PETERS & SON, TYPOGRAPHERS,
BOSTON.

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# RETURN OF THE FAIRIES.

## STORY OF A CHRISTMAS EVE.

HELEN'S Christmas-tree was lighted up the afternoon of the day before Christmas. Her mother had given her a party, and all her little friends, both boys and girls, had been invited. The tree, with its hundreds of colored candles and gayly tinted balls and bells and wreaths of tinsel, each branch loaded until it fairly groaned with gifts small and big, had been set in the drawing-room, carefully darkened as if it were indeed night.

The guests agreed that they had never before seen so beautiful a Christmas-tree. All the tints of the rainbow gleamed among the green, while strings of glass beads and chains of polished metal glistened like rain-drops in the summer sun. The parents and friends of each of the guests had sent presents to be hung upon the tree, or to be heaped on the floor beneath, besides all that Helen's parents had provided.

After the tree was stripped the company were led to the grand dining-room. The table looked almost like a flower-bed, yet space enough had been left for all the kinds of dainties which are best liked by children. The festival closed with games; and when the guests went away, each one told the truth to the little hostess in saying that none of them had ever enjoyed a more charming Christmas Eve.

But Helen's choicest gifts had been saved until after her guests were gone. Among them was a doll as large as a child and dressed like a grown woman of fashion, a pair of silver skates, a beautiful little desk with chair just fitted to it in size, a set of furs, and a loving note from her father saying there was a new Shetland pony for her in the stable. But I will not stop to attempt to so much as mention all of them.

It is now half-past six o'clock, and Helen is just finishing her tea in the nursery. She is quite alone. Her parents have both gone out for the evening; and the nurse, whose duty it was to attend to the little girl, was keeping her Christmas Eve down-stairs. It so happened that of all her presents she had brought only one into the nursery. This was a fruit-knife which her uncle had found in a far Eastern country. Having finished with her light meal, the child took up the knife and looked it over, remembering that her uncle had said, when he gave it to her, that it was many thousand years old, the story being that it once belonged to a famous magician. She noticed some words engraved on the handle, and drew the knife close to her face

while she tried to make them out. But no sooner had her breath fallen on the words than the light in the room suddenly brightened, just as if twice the gas-jets blazed up at once. As she raised her eyes she saw a wonderful creature,

Helen Has a Strange Visitor.

dressed in long flowing garments like a woman, but more beautiful than she had ever seen before.

"What do you want?" cried Helen, jumping out of her chair in terror.

"What do *you* want?" echoed the strange visitor; "I am here to do your bidding."

"But I did not call you," said Helen, hesitating whether to stay for the answer or to run out of the room.

"Yes," answered the visitor; "when you breathed on the words in the handle of that knife still in your hand, then it was that you called me."

The now thoroughly frightened child was about to rush out of the room, when the beautiful visitor put out her shapely white hand, and, smiling very sweetly, said, "Do not be afraid of me, little girl; I am your friend. Listen, and I will explain why it is that I come to you. That knife, which you hold in your hand, was made by a great magician more years ago than you can count. By his wonderful power, which people nowadays cannot understand, he made it so that when a little girl under ten years old breathes on the words engraved in the handle, I or others like me must straightway appear before her, and offer to bring about whatever she desires. The knife has not been used in this way for hundreds of years, because it has happened that it has been in the hands only of grown persons. But after so long waiting, I am at last called to service. Whatever you ask of me, it is my duty to do. If there is anything you want, you have only to mention it and I will obtain it for you."

Helen was not a timid child; and she put her hand in that of her beautiful visitor without further delay, saying, "And I can have anything I want?"

"Yes," answered her visitor, smiling sweetly. "Now, what do you want?"

But Helen hesitated a moment before replying.

"This is very kind of you," she said at last, in her most polite manner. "Can you spare me time to think a little?"

"Certainly," answered the visitor. "I have two hours to spend with you."

"Well," said Helen at last, "come with me and see my new Christmas presents. Perhaps, when I look them over, I will think of something I want."

So, hand in hand, the fairy and the little girl passed out of the nursery into the hall, and down the grand stairway to the still larger hall below, whose floor was polished like ivory and half covered with rugs of the softest tints and finest material, brought from the far East, where it took nearly a lifetime to make even one.

The door of the dining-room connecting with the hall stood ajar, and within could be seen the long table still covered with the remains of the feast which forty children had lately enjoyed. The air of the room was heavy with the perfume of big bouquets of the rarest of flowers, while at each deserted place at the table was a bunch of beautiful blossoms, which the more than satisfied little guests had not thought it worth while to take away with them.

But Helen eagerly drew her new friend into the drawing-room, the ceiling of which was painted to show the story of a famous poem, whose side walls were hung with beautiful

pictures, while rare pieces of statuary or highly ornamented tables and costly vases stood here and there. At one end of the room was the now dark Christmas-tree, which, tall as it was, did not reach, with its very topmost leaflet, half

Helen Shows Her Christmas Presents.

way to the ceiling. A couch had been drawn up on which many gifts had been carelessly thrown.

"Were all these presents given to you?" asked the fairy. "How kind your parents are to you!"

"Pooh," answered the child; "these are nothing!

Papa and mamma did not want to put my best things on the tree for fear of making the other children envious, you know. Come into the next room and I will show you my real presents;" and for the first time that afternoon Helen actually appeared for the moment to take an interest in her good things, since she thought she could astonish somebody by showing them.

The little room to which the child and the fairy had now come was full of beautiful and costly articles, to each of which was fastened a card showing that it was for Helen with the love of father or mother or some relative or close friend. This whole page is not large enough to describe them. The fairy glanced from the many gifts to the child upon whom all these favors were heaped.

"Your parents and friends love you very much. But you do not seem to be much pleased with all your gifts. How is it?"

After thinking for a moment, Helen answered, "Well, no. To tell the truth, I don't care much for any of my Christmas presents."

"But what would you have liked better?" asked the fairy. "You must know that you have only to say what you really want, and I can give it to you as soon as the words are out of your mouth."

"That is just my greatest trouble," said the child; "I do not know of anything that I want." The fairy looked astonished, and Helen hastened to explain. "You see, I have always had everything before I really had time to

want it, to say nothing of a great number of things which I never could have wanted. So now, when Christmas or my birthdays come, there is nothing I care for left to give me. What is a Christmas good for if a little girl doesn't want anything? It makes me sad to think that I do not find the joy in Christmas that other children do."

Then the fairy seemed to be saddened for a moment, and the brightness which had come from her dimmed, as does the light from the sun when clouds come before it. "My dear little girl," she said after a time, "I am afraid there is no gift I could bring you that would make you any happier. Your parents are only too ready to heap gifts upon you. In these days I see that those who are very rich can do more than the magicians of old would have dared to hope." The fairy moved as if about to go. "So, if you do not mind, I think I will leave you. Fairies and enchantments are of no use to such children as you, I think. How different it used to be a few thousand years ago!" and the beautiful creature sighed.

But Helen clung tight to her hand. "Are you sure there is nothing that I could think of to want? How many children there must be who would be only too glad to have the chance I do not know how to use."

A sudden idea seemed to strike the fairy. Instead of now trying to release herself from Helen's clinging hand, she bent her shining head, and pressed a light kiss on the child's pure but troubled forehead.

"You have made me think of a plan," she said. "Per-

haps, since you find you want nothing for yourself, you would like to use your chance to help somebody else not as fortunate as you."

Helen clapped her hands with glee. "Yes, yes," she cried, jumping up and down in excitement, "that would be delightful. But how am I to know what these other people want, or how to help them?"

"Suppose we visit some of them," replied the fairy, now as calm and sweet as at first. "I can make us both invisible, so that those that we call on will not know we are there. Then we can hear them talk, and see for ourselves what would make them happy."

"But how far are we to go?" objected Helen, shrinking a little from the trip out into the night.

The fairy smiled. "Oh! as far or as little way as you choose. You know that everything is to go to-night by your wishes. Or you can go as fast or as slow as you please. Shall we start?"

Helen still hesitated. "But how am I to give people what they want just by wishing it?" she asked.

Now the fairy laughed out loud. "Why, my dear child, have you not read enough fairy-stories to know that there are no 'whys' where fairies are concerned? I will guide you, if you are ready to start."

Helen was too much excited to speak, but she nodded her little head very bravely; and in a moment more, enfolded in the loving arms of the fairy, she passed right through the thick stone walls of her house, and floated

down the street much as a bit of thistle-down floats on the gentle summer breeze.

As they were passing a gayly lighted house, Helen cried, "Let's wait a minute and hear the music. This is where papa and mamma are spending the evening. Oh, see the ladies and gentlemen dancing past the windows! What a fine time they must be having!"

"So these people on the sidewalk seem to think," answered the fairy. "Listen to them."

"How happy people can be if they are rich!" said one.

"Oh! I wish I could live in a house like that," said another.

The complaining ones did not look like persons to be pitied; but Helen whispered to her new friend, "Why may I not make these people happy?"

The fairy replied, "You are free to give them what you choose, my dear; but I am very sure what they are so hungry for would not make them any happier if they had it."

So the fairy and the child swept on until they came to the streets where the stores were all ablaze with lights, and crowds of curious people staring into the show windows. It was in front of a candy-store that two children were standing, looking in greedily at the tempting piles of colored bonbons.

"Poor little things!" said Helen; "why not stop and help them? Don't object; if I have any such power as you tell me, I must use some of it now. I want these two

poor children to have not only their candies but the other things, which will change that sad look on their faces and never let it come back again."

Helen Sees People She Wants to Help.

The fairy smiled sweetly as she replied, "I obey your command. A messenger is already on the way, who will not only give them a happy Christmas Eve, but will do his best to make their home much more pleasant than it has ever been."

It was only a few steps farther along that two well-

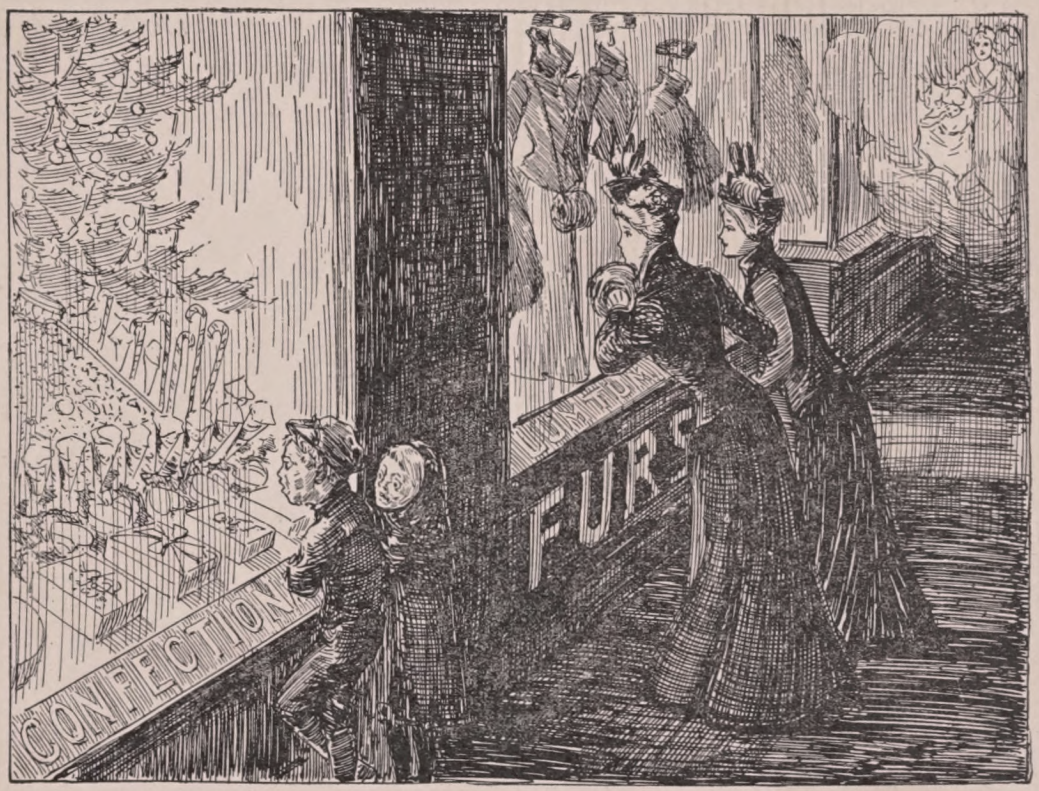
dressed women stood gazing into the windows of a fur store. One of them was saying, "Oh! I so want that set of sealskins. I am sure I would be perfectly happy if I only had it."

Helen laid her hand on the arm of her new friend, "Let me help her. Surely I shall never find a better chance to do good. You see how unhappy this woman is. Why not give her the furs?"

"You may do so if you like," answered the fairy; "but if you take my advice you will hasten to those who need you much more."

So they sped more rapidly away from the bright and gay streets, and into the part of the city where the poorest people live. The streets became narrow and dark and dirty, the houses were ugly blocks, twenty families living in twice as many rooms. The visitors were not hindered by walls, however solid they might look, but passed through brick as if it were nothing but air, and stood in a room the like of which Helen had never seen before. Three or four broken windows were stuffed with old rags to keep out the crisp December air. The walls of the room were bare, and there was not so much as a scrap of carpet on the cheerless floor. The only furniture in the room was a bed, with a cot beside it, a bare table, two or three hardwood chairs, and an old kitchen stove.

A man sat at the table from which the family had just eaten a scanty and uninviting meal of bread and water. His head was bowed over his hands, and he seemed very




Helen Sees More Unhappy Persons.

unhappy. Two little children, both younger than Helen, were holding up their torn stockings to their mother to hang up behind the stove.

"It's Christmas Eve, you know, mother," said the six-year-old boy. "This is the night that Santa Claus comes and fills the stockings of good children with presents."

The mother wiped away a tear; and her voice sounded broken as she answered, "I'm afraid there is no use in hanging up your stockings to-night."

"Why, dear mamma," asked the little girl, who was two years younger; "haven't we been pretty good? We are sorry, aren't we, brother, that we cried to-night because there was not bread enough for supper. But Santa wouldn't stay away just for that, when we are sorry."

The mother took the two pairs of stockings helplessly from the uplifted hands. "I guess there are too many holes in the stockings," she said at last, in a voice that did not sound like their mother's.

Then the father raised his pale face from his hands to say, "Why this nonsense? You know there is nothing for them."

But at this the children began to cry; and Helen, whom none of them could see, cried too, while the father dropped his head on his hands again, but lower than before. The mother took a hammer, and tacked the two ragged pairs of stockings up behind the stove without another word. Then the children climbed gleefully into their little bed. They were sure that dear Santa would come. All they had been afraid of was that their mother would not hang up their stockings.

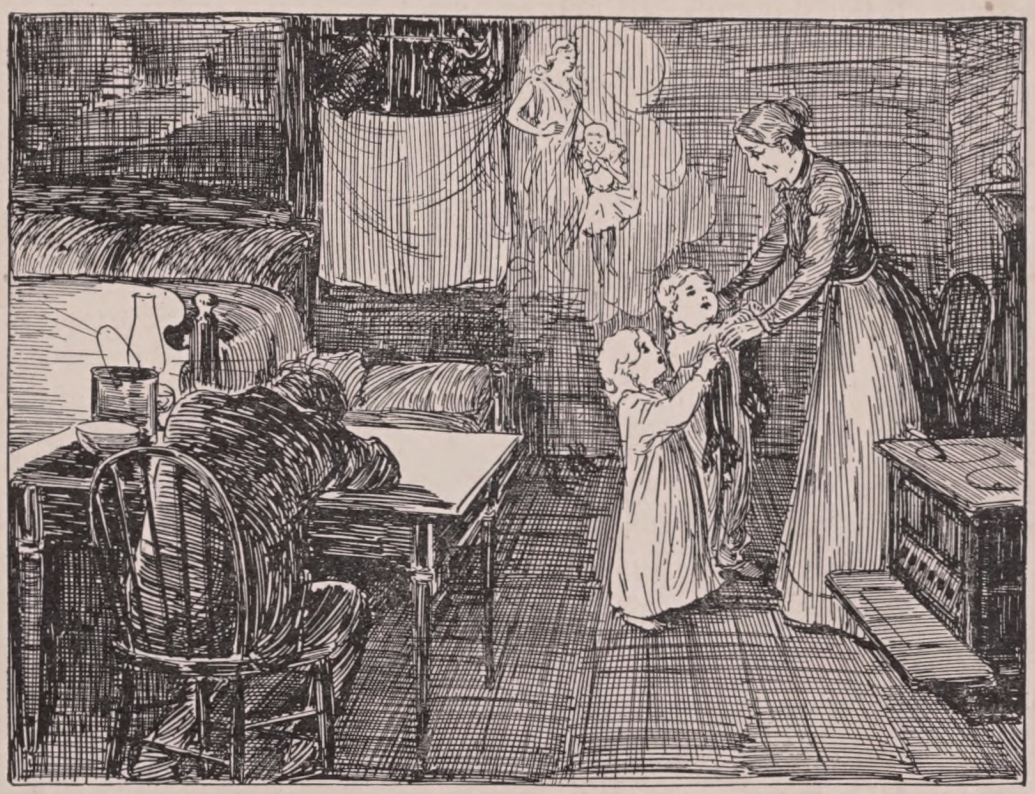
As for Helen, she was crying so hard that she could scarcely find her voice to say, "Dear, good fairy, please do not refuse to help them."

"Be patient, my dear," answered the fairy.

Now the father raised his head from his hands again, and said in a low tone to his wife, "Why did you do it? You know as well as I that their poor little stockings will

be empty in the morning. I can see their little faces when they find that Santa Claus has forgotten them;" and his voice broke.

The mother did not look him in the face as she



Helen Finds a Sad Family.

replied, "Yes, and so can I. But I saw no harm in sending them to bed happy. It will be bad enough in the morning for all of us."

"True enough," said the father; "not a mouthful of

food or a penny in the house, and even hope flown out of the window. Poor little things, they will cry so hard for their missing breakfast that they will soon forget about Santa's neglect;" and he covered his eyes with his hand as if to shut out the sight.

"Perhaps to-morrow you can find some work by which you can earn money enough to feed us," said his wife wistfully. "It takes so little just for that, you know."

"If I could only find my old friend," he replied, "there might be some hope. But you know how I have searched in vain for him. Nobody seems to want me. How cruel is a great city to a man or woman without friends!"

And now the children were both asleep with a sweet smile on their faces, as they dreamed about Santa Claus.

But Helen could endure the scene no longer. "I can't wait a minute more," she cried. "Santa Claus must come right away."

And the words were no sooner out of her mouth than a sharp knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," called the father, without even looking round. He expected no visitor except some one asking him for money which he could not pay. He feared most of all that it was the landlord come to say they must move out into the street.

The door opened, and a burly figure entered.

"Good-evening," said a bluff and cheery voice, "and a merry Christmas to all."

The father turned in his seat ready to demand with angry words what sort of a merry Christmas there could be for the poor, when a sight met his eyes that stopped the words on his lips.

The uninvited guest wore long white whiskers; his

Helen Calls Santa Claus to the Rescue.

cheeks were cherry red, while laughing black eyes twinkled out from beneath shaggy gray eyebrows. He was clad in

furs from top to toe, and carried a big pack on his back, from the open top of which could be seen all sorts of toys such as delight children. Without delay he swung his pack from his back to the floor; but by this time it may be believed the mother had become very much interested.

"Merry Christmas to you, sir," she said; "you must excuse us for being slow in answering your greeting, but it has been long since we have heard words so pleasant. And what brings you to this dreary place on so gay a night?"

"Are there not two good little children here?" asked the bluff visitor; "I seldom make a mistake."

The father looked on speechless; but the mother, with brightened face, promptly replied, "Why, yes, there are no sweeter or better children in the whole world than our little girl and boy."

"Well, then," continued the visitor, looking inquiringly around the room, "I have brought some little things for them. Where are their stockings?"

The mother pointed to the wall behind the stove, "The children wanted so much to hang up their stockings that I let them," she explained breathlessly; "but I told them not to expect anything."

The visitor bustled across the room with his pack, the mother keeping beside him. "There are big holes in the stockings," said she sadly; "I could not mend them."

"Never mind that," broke in the visitor; "what the stockings don't hold, the floor will."

Just then the children in the cot were awakened by the

Santa Claus Opens His Big Pack.

strange voice; and both sat bolt upright, gazing with wide open eyes at the new-comer with his wonderful bag.

"It is Santa Claus," whispered one.

"Yes," answered the other; "and you know mamma thought he wouldn't find us way up here."

"But we mustn't let him know we saw him," said the boy; "he might not like it."

So without another word the dear children lay down again in their little bed, and went back to their dreams.

Santa Claus lost no further time, but began to take the most wonderful things out of his pack. First, of course, came boxes and horns of candy — no child's Christmas would be right without candy. Then came bags of pop-corn, big oranges, and cookies of all sorts. Now the pack began to give forth still more delightful gifts — trumpets and whistles, drums and harmonicas, dolls and dolls' clothes, toy wagons, Noah's arks, blocks, picture-books, lead soldiers, jumping-jacks, until the space behind the dingy old kitchen stove looked like a toy-store. And all the while the father was trembling with excitement, and the loving mother kept breaking out into words of delight and surprise. As for Helen, the invisible spectator of all the happiness her wish had brought into this sad home, she was clapping her hands every second, and wondering it made no noise.

But it seemed that Santa Claus had by no means finished when he had brought out of his wonderful pack the great supply of toys and candies and fruits. He now began to draw forth all sorts of tempting food, — a turkey and a pair of chickens all cooked and ready to eat, a delicious-looking jar of cranberry sauce, pies and cakes, and plenty of good bread and butter. He only paused long enough to get his breath, when down he dove into another part of the big pack, and this time brought out mittens, reefers, coats, caps, stockings, even boots and shoes, until the room began to look like a clothing-store and bakery, with a toy annex behind the stove.

Then the remarkable visitor shouldered his pack again,

and made as if he were going out, when suddenly the father started forward. "I did not believe in Santa Claus before," he said; "but I believe in him now, and if he ever came where he was needed, he did so this evening. You don't know how grateful we are, or how happy the little ones will be in the morning."

Santa Claus cleared his throat as if uncertain whether to laugh or cry. "Well, I'm glad I came. Good-by, and a merry Christmas again."

Shouldering his pack, his hand was turning the door-knob, when Helen whispered to the fairy, "Don't let him go yet. Can't Santa find the man some nice place to work? Oh! please make him, dear fairy."

"Just as you say, my dear," answered the fairy with a smile; and the words were no sooner out of her mouth than Santa Claus turned back into the room.

"I have forgotten something," he said, as he took off his pack again; "I have a letter which I must give you."

After fumbling awhile in his big pockets, he drew forth a sealed envelope and handed it to the father. Then he was gone so suddenly that it seemed as if he must have dropped through the floor.

For as much as a minute after the wonderful visitor had gone the father stood with the letter in his hand, as if he did not know what to do with it. Then he said to his wife, "I don't know whether I am dreaming or not."

She came close up to him so she could look over his shoulder, as she answered, "We are both wide awake, my

dear. But why don't you open your letter? it may be another pleasant surprise."

So he tore open the letter as if more afraid than hopeful of what should be in it, and this is what he read aloud: —

"DEAR FRIEND, — I only just found out where you were. I need a man just like you, my old friend, in my office. Come the day after Christmas, ready to go to work."

But when the father came to the name signed to the letter he was too much astonished to pronounce it. He merely let the letter fall to the floor, murmuring, —

"This must be a dream."

"But who wrote it?" asked his excited wife; "does this mean that our troubles are to be over?"

Then the husband caught his wife in his arms, and kissed her again and again. "Yes, my dear, it means that our troubles are over. This letter is from an old friend of mine, now one of the richest merchants in the city. Don't you see, he has found out about me, and wants me to help him in his business. If we are not both dreaming, we shall never know what it is to be cold or hungry again, suffering ten times worse in seeing our children suffer."

Just then there was a rustling sound from the cot, and a voice piped up, "Has Santa Claus gone yet, mamma?" The children were awake, and both sitting up in their bed, their faces flushed, and their eyes shining with excitement and pleasure.

"Yes, darlings," answered the mother, going up to the

cot, and bending over to kiss the sweet eager faces ; " Santa has gone, and he did not forget you."

" Then mayn't we get up," asked the boy, " and see what is in our stockings ? Why need we wait till morning ? O mamma ! we saw him, didn't we, sister ? but we didn't let him know."

" Yes, please let us get up, mamma," chimed in the little girl. " We can't go to sleep again unless you do."

" Certainly," said the father. " Let them get up this minute. You know Christmas only comes once a year ;" and he laughed as gayly as a child.

So the mother helped the children put on enough clothing so they would not take cold, and soon they pattered across the bare floor to the array of wonderful gifts behind the stove.

" Oh, here is a doll !" cried the little girl, clapping her hands. " It must be for me, I did so want a doll."

" And here is a drum !" shouted the boy ; " that must be for me, I thought I was never going to get a drum."

" And here is a set of little dishes !" cried the girl.

" And here is a box of lead soldiers !" shouted the boy.

" See the picture-books and the blocks !"

" Look at the trumpets and the tops !"

" The stockings are just full of candy !"

" Oh, see these oranges !"

" These mittens just fit me !"

" This cap is just my size !"

" These beautiful shoes must be for me !"

"And these boots must be mine."

And finally the father took the little girl in his lap, and the mother held the boy in her arms, while each of the children rattled on about their wonderful Christmas Eve,


Helen Sees a Happy Family.

and laughed at the old folks for having said there would be no use to hang up stockings. And the joy that shone on the faces of that father and mother no words can describe.

Helen would have stayed much longer, but the fairy reminded her that time was going fast.

"This is such a happy night for me," said the girl. "Where are we going next? There must be many others just as miserable as was the family we have helped. You seem to be taking me away from this block. Is there nobody left unhappy within these dismal walls?"

"Alas, yes, my child," answered the fairy; "we could hardly go amiss. But my time is almost gone. You remember I told you when I first came that I had but two hours for you. They are now on their last minutes. I have barely enough time left to take you safely home before I must go."

As soon as they had reached Helen's own room again, her beautiful friend bent down to kiss her good-by. "I must now be on the wing."

"Oh!" cried the child, "I have had such a happy evening; I never was so happy before. It was better than all the fine presents I have received in all my life."

"Good-by," said the fairy, moving away.

"Good-by," answered Helen; "but it will not be for long. Now that I know you, I shall call on you very often. Can't you come again to-morrow night?"

"As long as you keep your knife, and remain under ten years old, you can call me whenever you wish, and I shall be glad to come; I have had vacation enough. It is a delight to me to help to do such things as you have asked for. Another little girl might not use the magic knife so well. Be very careful not to lose it."

Helen began to look troubled as she glanced over the

Helen Bids Her Fairy Good-By.

table. "I thought I took the knife with me in my hand; I hope I did not lose it; I don't see it about the room. What shall I do if it is lost?"

"Perhaps you may find it," answered her friend, still moving away; "but if you do not, just keep on doing what you have enjoyed doing so much to-night, — helping those who need help. You have found the secret of real happiness."

"But I am not a fairy," said the child, just ready to cry.

"No," replied the beautiful visitor; "but what good

you can do of your own self will give you far greater happiness. Good-by."

And the fairy was gone, while in her place, when Helen looked up again, was the nurse. "It is long past your bed-time, child," said the woman; "why didn't you call me? I have been having such a pleasant time down-stairs that I quite forgot you. You must have been lonesome."

"Oh, no!" answered Helen, following her out of the room; "I have never been so happy before in my whole life."

# STORY OF THE THREE FISHES.

It is a sad thing for a boy to be left without a father and mother, but that is just what happened to Harry Bolton when he was only ten years old. His father died first; and his mother had a hard time earning enough money to buy food and clothes for herself and her boy for two years, after which she also fell sick and died.

Harry's uncle was not a very pleasant man, and he had a large family of his own to care for. So, although he made a home for Harry, the boy could not help thinking that his uncle did not love him, and that his aunt wished him out of the way. His cousins, too, were not agreeable playfellows; they often treated Harry so badly that he cried, but he was always very careful to go by himself when he did so, because he knew very well that he could expect no comfort from his uncle or aunt. His father and mother had always thought he was a good boy. They never had to tell him but once when they wanted him to do or not to do anything. He would always run his little legs off to please them. All the neighbors had said, too, that there was no better boy in town than Harry Bolton. But although he was just the same boy in his

uncle's house, always willing to do as he was bid, not quarrelsome or fault-finding, still he never had a word of praise there, and he only hoped for the day when he was grown up, and could go away and earn his own living.

Harry's room was in the attic of the house, a very large room indeed, for that matter, since it was the whole attic, his bed being laid on the floor in one corner. Harry had no companion at night but the rats, of which he was very much afraid.

It happened that one night he felt very badly indeed. One of his cousins had quarrelled with him, and struck him in the face, and afterwards falling down and hurting himself, he set up a great cry, calling his mother from the house. The naughty boy told her that Harry had struck him; and she whipped her nephew very hard, and sent him up to his attic without any supper. Harry tried to sleep; but the rats were very lively that night, and, although they meant no harm, they frightened him. Then he fell to thinking of what an unhappy life he had, and wishing that his father and mother were alive to give him their tender love and care. The boy had not known such a thing as a loving word or a kiss since he had come to his uncle's house to live.

When it had grown quite dark, Harry arose from his bed, and walked to the little window of his attic, and looked out. He could see the twinkling lights of the houses all over the village, and he wondered whether there was any other little boy as miserable as he in the whole world.

Harry Suffers for Another's Fault.

"I wish there were such things as fairies," he cried; and then was frightened at the sound of his own voice, lest it might have been heard down-stairs, and get him another whipping.

All of a sudden he heard an answer, "There are such things as fairies."

And, sure enough, on the coping of the little attic window stood the most beautiful little creature one could think of. She was not much taller than the length of his arm, and was dressed in cloth of gold, all sprinkled over with

diamonds. Her beautiful arms were bare from the shoulder; and on her fingers were rings set with jewels, the names of which he did not know. From each shoulder wings unfolded, as white as snow, their edges glistening like hoar-frost on a bright fall morning. On her head was a little crown, and in her hand a wand of ivory in the top of which shone a diamond as large as a pea. But her face was most beautiful of all, so sweet and smiling and gentle.

"There are such things as fairies," she repeated; "for I am one, and I have come to see if I can help you."

"How did you happen to come to me?" asked Harry, trembling with excitement at such joy as he had not had for many months.

"Because you have always been a good boy," she said — "have always told the truth, been obedient to your parents, and kind to every one. When such boys are in trouble, fairies love to help them. Now tell me what I can do for you."

The boy was too much confused and too happy at her kind words to know quite what to say. "Oh, thank you!" he began, and then he stopped.

She smiled very sweetly at him, and said, "You don't seem to know what to ask me, so I will think for you. Now, do just as I say, and your sorrows will all be ended."

"Oh, I will! I will!" he cried. So, while he was still leaning on the window, and the beautiful fairy was standing on the outside of the ledge, she told him what to do.

"Get up early in the morning, and go down to the brook to fish. Throw your line in first where the water is deepest, a little way below the bridge. Whatever you

A Fairy Makes Harry a Visit.

catch throw it back again. Then wade across the brook to the other side, and throw your line in again, and once more whatever you catch throw back into the brook. Then walk along to the shallowest place in the whole brook, just above the big rock, and throw in your hook once more; but what you catch the third time keep and dress."

A hundred questions rushed to the end of Harry's tongue. "What good will a little fish do me?" he cried; but all he heard was a laugh, like a chime of sweet bells, a rustle of wings like a dove's, and the fairy was gone.

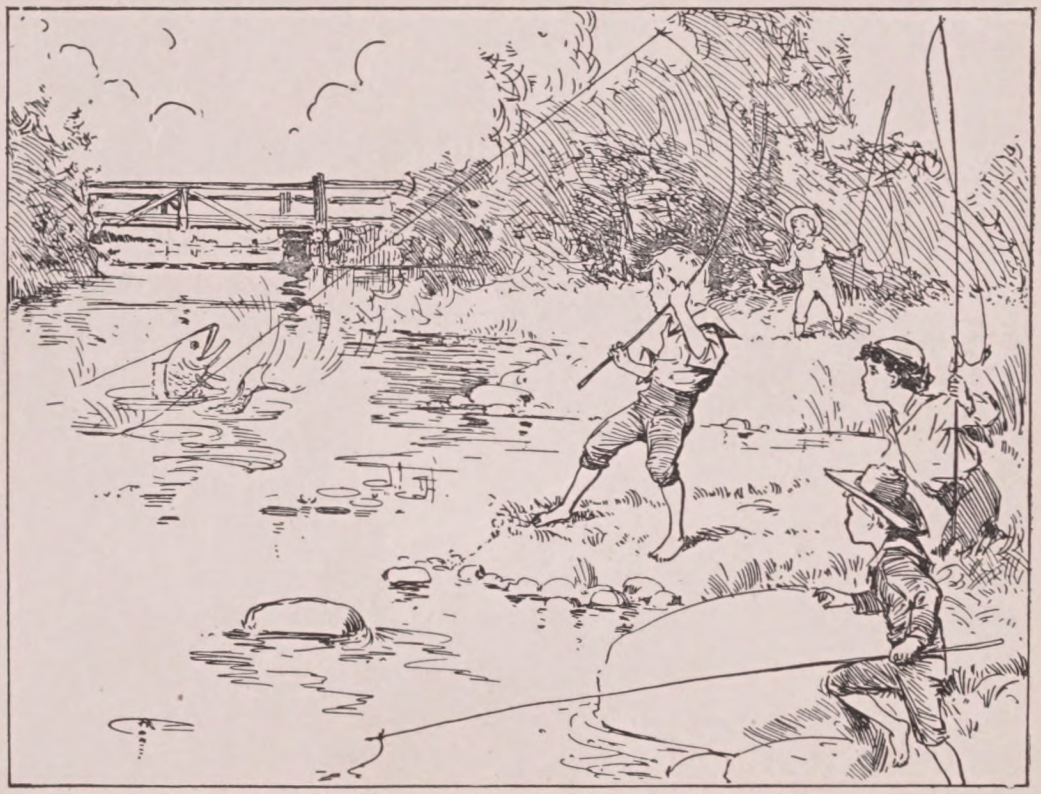
For a long time he stood waiting, hoping that she would come back and tell him more; and when she did not come he felt even more sad than at first, more lonesome than ever. Why had he not asked the fairy for some great thing before it was too late? Then he went back to his bed, and cried himself to sleep.

The first light of day that came into Harry's attic awoke him, and he remembered what the fairy had said to him the night before. It did not take him long to get his fish-line, and hurry down-stairs. He did not wait for his breakfast. He was very sure no one would miss him if he never came back. He went out in the garden and dug his bait, and ran down to the stream. Taking his place a little way below the bridge, where the water was deepest, he made ready to throw in his line. There were other little fishermen close at hand besides Harry, but no one happened to want to stand where he did.

He threw his line very carefully, although his hands were trembling, as he wondered what would happen next. No sooner had his hook touched the water than the pole, which was a strong one, bent almost double; and the other boys standing near set up a great shout, as Harry pulled a fish two feet long out of the brook.

The other boys, who had only caught a few little fishes

each, gathered around him in great excitement, and all said that no such fish as he had caught had ever been seen in that brook before. It was large enough to make a meal



Harry Catches a Big Fish.

for a family, and Harry thought how pleased his aunt would be to see him bring home such a prize. Perhaps at last she would say a kind word to him. Then he remembered what the fairy had told him, — to throw back the first fish he caught; and the tears gushed to his eyes to think of

what he would have to do; for he was a true fisherman, and it seemed almost wicked to throw away such a wonderful catch as that. Yet no sooner had he released the hook, than, taking the big fish in both hands, he threw it back into the stream.

You can imagine how the other little boys felt when they saw what Harry had done. They called him every name they could think of, and some of them even rushed into the water to try to catch the fish with their hands before it could get away. They asked him why he had done so crazy a thing, what he had been thinking of, what he meant by coming there and catching the best fish, and then throwing it back into the water. Harry did not answer them a word, but taking his bait-box and his pole and line, waded across the little brook to the other side, very thankful that the fairy had told him he might do that.

But he had no sooner rebaited his hook, and prepared to throw it again into the water, than he found all the other boys had dropped their own poles, and waded across to his side. They were all anxious to see what this queer fisherman would do next. When the hook struck the water, the pole again bent double with the weight of the fish which had taken it in its mouth; and all the boys set up a shout, "He has caught the same one again."

But when Harry attempted to lift the fish out of the water, the weight was so great that it broke his pole in halves; and he had to rush out into the stream, and catch hold of the line itself, in order to save his fish, which was so

heavy that, stout little boy as he was, he could hardly lift it out of the water, standing as he did in the middle of the stream.

He once more loosened the hook from the mouth of this second and very much larger fish, and threw him back into the stream, and the boys on the bank of the brook went almost wild in their vexation ; and when he came back to shore they set upon him, threw him down, struck him, and kicked him. Perhaps there would have been no more of this story to tell unless a man had happened to pass that way to drive the boys away from Harry, so that the poor little fellow, with bleeding face and aching bones, could get to his feet again. When the man asked them why they were beating the poor little boy, they all tried to explain at once ; but he thought they must be telling a lie, for no such large fish had ever been seen in the village before, so he threatened to duck them in the brook if they did not stop telling stories, and went on his way.

It was some time before poor little Harry could straighten his line again, rebait his hook, and get ready, with what was left of his pole, to make his final throw in the shallowest part of the stream, according to the fairy's directions. The boys now stood close about him, expecting that this wonderful fisherman would next time surely land a whale, and ready to take it away from him, happen what might, before he could do so foolish a thing as to throw it away.

No sooner had the hook again touched the water than

a fish took it; but the pole was not broken this time, nor yet bent double. Indeed, the weight was so slight that the line hardly straightened out as Harry lifted the fish out of the stream. This last capture of Harry's was as small as the others had been big; and the other boys, instead of try-

Three to One Against Harry.

ing to take it away from him, threw themselves on the grass and roared in laughter and merriment at this third catch. And when they saw Harry, instead of throwing it back, as

they supposed of course he would do, since the fish was too small to eat, take it carefully from the hook, and put it in his pocket, they laughed louder than ever. After winding his line about what was left of the pole, and throwing away the bait, he walked off, and the last sound he heard was the laughter of those same boys.

His bones were aching from the beating he had received, and even after washing the blood from his face he still felt very sore. He could not understand how such a little fish could do him any good, after all his trouble; but he was sure that the fairy would not have told him to throw away two such wonderful catches as he had made, unless there was something he could not see in this little creature which was going to help him. Making his way behind a bush, where no one could see him, he took his knife from his pocket, and prepared to dress the little fish, with the idea that next he would build a little fire and eat him. The silly boy did not know but perhaps, after he had swallowed it, he would at once become a man, something which he had been wanting so long. But his knife struck something hard. Inside he found a stone, almost as large as a pea, which, when he came to wipe it, shone like the brilliant he had seen in the end of the fairy's wand. Harry had often stood in front of the village jewellery store staring at the shining gems in the window; but he had never seen a stone as large as this, and the more he wiped it, the brighter it shone. It was a diamond; there was no doubt about that.

Leaving his hook and line and what was left of his pole

under the bush, where he could find them again; and putting the diamond carefully away in his most secret pocket, Harry started into the village and down toward the jewellery

Harry Finds a Diamond in the Little Fish.

store, intending to try to sell his wonderful prize. When he entered the store the jeweller stood talking with a customer, and Harry, hearing the word "diamond" mentioned, suddenly became very much interested. They were talking about the rich Mr. Smith, who lived on top of the hill, and who had lost, only the day before, a very costly dia-

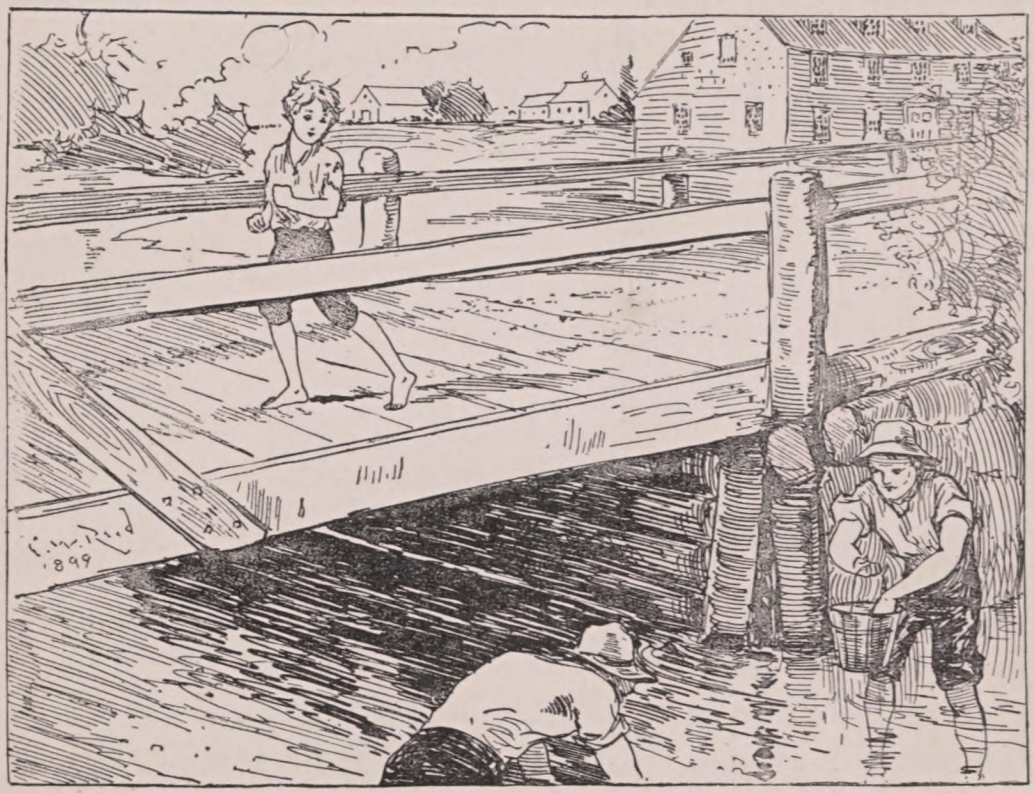
mond. It had fallen, so the men were saying, out of the setting in his shirt-bosom while he was standing on the bridge which crossed the very same brook where Harry had caught his fish. Mr. Smith had sent men down to the brook to scrape its bed almost clean, under where the bridge was, in search for the diamond. Mr. Smith felt very badly, not only because the diamond was a valuable one, but even more because it had belonged to his father and his grandfather before him, and he would rather have lost ten other diamonds as large than this one.

Just then the jeweller happened to see the boy standing there, and told him very crossly to go out of the store. This Harry was quite ready to do; and he did not stop on the street either, but started as fast as his little legs would carry him, down the road, toward the little bridge which led across the brook.

When he reached the bridge, sure enough, the men were still scraping the bottom, in search for the lost diamond, taking up the sand in pails, and then washing it out, looking carefully at every little pebble, in the hope that it might be the missing gem. But Harry now knew that they would not find the diamond there, since it was in his pocket, the little fish which he had caught at his third throw having swallowed it.

He ran quickly across the bridge and up the hill toward Mr. Smith's house. The diamond was Mr. Smith's; and like the honest boy that he was, Harry had but one thought, and that was to return it to its owner.

Now, every boy in town knew where Mr. Smith's house was. He was the richest man in all the country round; he had one house in this village, another in the city, and still another at the seashore, and at that spent



Harry Hurrying to Take the Diamond to its Owner.

a good deal of his time in foreign countries. The place was surrounded by a high iron fence; and the entrance was between two stone posts, the gates of which hung wide open when Harry came to them. Many a time before he had looked through that high fence and longed to go inside;

but this time he did not stop for permission, and thinking only of his errand, rushed boldly through the open gates and up the winding driveway, in the direction of the house, which looked to him more like a palace.

He had gone but a few steps before he heard a gruff voice saying, "What are you doing here, boy?" and looking around, he saw a man in working-clothes, with a rake in his hand, whom he supposed was the gardener.

"I want to see Mr. Smith," he answered, almost out of breath from his running.

"What does such a little ragamuffin as you want to see Mr. Smith for?" asked the gardener, coming up to Harry.

"Oh, I must see him!" said Harry.

"There is no 'must' about it," growled the gardener, laying his hand on the little fellow's shoulder. "We don't allow boys like you in these grounds; you're a little beggar, that's what you are."

"Oh, no!" cried Harry, "I never begged in my life. There is something I want to see him about."

But the gardener, still keeping hold of Harry's shoulder, laughed at him. "What could such a little rowdy as you want of Mr. Smith? He would drive you out of his house with a whip."

"Not if he knew what I have for him," said Harry.

"What is that?" demanded the gardener. But Harry was a careful little boy, and he thought it would not be best to tell. "Come, get out!" said the gardener, pushing him back with his strong hands.

But just then it happened that a maid, who had been sent on an errand down to the village, came in through the gate, and seeing the gardener pushing the boy so roughly away, cried out to him, "What is the matter?"

The Gardener Stops the Boy.

At this the gardener took his hand from Harry's shoulder, and began to explain to the maid, who was one of his friends. Harry did not wait for any better chance, but the moment the heavy hand was removed from his shoulder

he started to run up the driveway as fast as he could. As for the gardener, he was satisfied with calling two or three times after the boy, and then gave the rest of his attention to the pretty maid.

But it was quite a steep hill, and very soon all Harry's breath was gone. Looking back, he saw that the gardener was no longer even looking after him, so he stopped to catch his breath and look about him. It was the most beautiful place he had ever seen. On either side of the driveway were tall trees, whose boughs sheltered him from above almost like the roof of a piazza. But beyond the trees he could see flower-beds, summer-houses all covered with blossoms, little ponds with white swans on them, and boats on the banks, and a playground, where a sweet little girl of about his own age, with a sunbonnet lying back on her shoulders, was romping with two or three of her little mates. He would dearly have loved to stay there for a long time; but he remembered his errand, and hurried on toward the house.

The driveway led up to the front steps, but they were quite too grand for him. The house was so large that he thought half the village might have lived in it, and as he glanced into the rooms through the windows they were like glimpses of fairyland to him. Making his way around the house, he at last came to a door which he thought more proper for a barefooted boy to enter, and going up to it he knocked. A maid came to the door, and looked very much astonished to see who it was that had knocked.

"What do you want here?" she said.

"I want to see Mr. Smith," answered Harry.

"Mr. Smith!" she laughed; "why, he doesn't want to see such little scamps as you."

Harry Sees Grace and Her Friends at Play.

"I have something to tell him," pleaded Harry earnestly.

"He is eating his breakfast," said the maid very crossly, and was just shutting the door in Harry's face, when a

man, whom Harry could not see, spoke to her from behind, and asked who it was.

"Let me see the boy," said the man. So the maid opened the door, and Harry stepped inside, and, looking to see who it was that had been talking to the maid, did not like his face at all. He was afraid of him at once. It was the butler, the man whom Mr. Smith hired to manage the whole house for him.

Now, the butler was a shrewd man; and he was satisfied that this little boy, who was so very anxious to see Mr. Smith, really had something important to say to him. But the butler was also a very selfish man, always trying to think of how he could gain something for himself out of whatever happened. He did not want to have the maid hear what Harry had to say; so he called pleasantly, "Come this way, little boy."

The maid looked surprised to hear the butler speak so politely to a barefooted little urchin; but she had her own work to do, and went to attend to it, while the man led Harry through a long hall, into a room which the little fellow thought must be the best parlor of the whole house, although really it was only the butler's waiting-room.

"Now, what is it, my little man?" began the butler very smoothly.

"I want to see Mr. Smith," repeated Harry again.

"Sit down, my little fellow," said the man. But Harry had never before seen such beautiful chairs as there were in

this room, and he was afraid that he might soil one of them if he sat in it.

"Oh, no!" he replied; "I would rather stand."

"What do you want to see him for, my little man?" asked the butler.

"I can't tell you," said Harry. For the more smoothly the butler spoke, the more afraid Harry was of him. He felt that he was a worse man than the gardener, although not anything like as rough.

"Tell me your errand, little boy," said the butler, "and I will ask Mr. Smith if he will see you."

"I can't do that," insisted Harry; "I want to see him myself."

By this time the butler was certain that Harry's errand was something about the lost diamond; and he wanted very much to learn what the secret was, so that he could use it for his own benefit. So he asked suddenly, "You have found the diamond, have you?"

"Oh! how did you know?" cried Harry, forgetting for the moment, and letting his secret out.

"Give it to me," added the butler, smiling, "and I will take it to him."

"No, no," insisted Harry; "I must take it to him myself."

At this the butler looked very cross, and said more roughly, "Well, you stay here, and I will go to Mr. Smith and ask him if he wants to see you."

Then he left the room, but had been gone only a very

few seconds before he came in again, and said, "Mr. Smith directs you to give me the diamond, so that I can take it to him. He is eating his breakfast."

The Butler Chases Harry.

"No," repeated Harry; "I must take it to him myself."

"I don't believe you have any diamond," said the butler, now talking very crossly; "I think you are only a little beggar. Show it to me quickly, or I will shut you up in the cellar."

So Harry, not knowing what else to do, and being very much frightened, took the stone from his pocket and held it out. He saw from the look in the man's eyes that it was really the lost diamond, and almost at once the butler jumped toward him, and tried to snatch the jewel from his hand; but Harry gave a loud cry and ran for the door, the butler very close after him.

The poor boy had never been so frightened in his life before. He thought of the dark cellar, where the man had said he would shut him up, and wished he had not listened to what the fairy had said to him the night before. Out into the hall he ran as fast as he could, hearing the heavy steps of the man behind him; and just as he was almost overtaken he ran into the arms of a child, a girl, whom he almost knocked down.

"Oh! oh!" she cried. "What is the matter?"

Harry was too much surprised to speak, but the butler was not slow to explain that this was a beggar boy who had been caught in the house.

"I am not a beggar," Harry cried breathlessly; and looking up, he saw that the little girl he had run into was the same one that he had seen playing in the grounds a few minutes before. "I want to see your father," he added quickly. "I have found his diamond, but this bad man tried to take it from me."

At this the butler laid his hand heavily on Harry's shoulder, and tried to pull him away.

"Don't you believe him, Miss Grace," he said; "he is a bad boy."

But little Grace, looking in Harry's face, could not believe that he was bad; and she said to the man, "Take your hands from the boy; I want to speak to him;" then, more kindly, to Harry, "if you have my father's diamond, let me see it, little boy."

So Harry opened his hand, and showed the stone lying in its palm. Her eyes shone as brightly as the diamond itself; and her face was all smiles as she cried, "Yes, yes; that is my father's diamond; how pleased he will be! Come with me, little boy; I will take you to my father."

The butler could think of nothing else to say or do; so he stood back looking very angry, while the two children passed up the hallway, hand in hand. The little girl took Harry from this hall into a far wider and grander one, the ceilings of which were very high above his head, and covered with beautiful pictures, and into a room where a gentleman sat all alone finishing his breakfast.

The table was bright with silver and beautifully painted china, and the room itself was so grand that Harry was more frightened to look about him than he had been even at the threats of the butler. But how surprised the gentleman at the table looked when he saw his beautiful little daughter leading a barefooted boy with a scratched and bruised face!

"What is this, Grace?" he said.

"He has found your diamond, papa."

"This little chap?" exclaimed the gentleman, rising and coming toward them. "It cannot be."

"Show it to him, little boy," she said.

So Harry opened his tightly clinched little fist, showing the gem in its palm.

"Yes," said the gentleman with a pleased smile, "it is my diamond. And how did you find it?"

"Oh, it is such a long story!" said Harry; "and I had such a hard time getting it to you; I am so tired."

"And hungry too, perhaps," said the gentleman.

"Oh, yes!" cried the little girl; "you must be hungry."

So she pushed a chair up to the table, and led Harry to a seat in it, and served him with the nicest dainties on the table.

But the boy was too excited to eat. He tried two or three mouthfuls, and then said, "I can't swallow."

The gentleman was all smiles and kindness. "Perhaps you would rather tell your story first."

So, taking his little daughter on his knee, and looking pleasantly across the table to Harry, he asked, "How did you find my diamond? Begin at the beginning, and tell me all about it. But first tell me who you are, and who are your father and mother."

So Harry began by telling him that he had no father or mother, but lived with his uncle and his aunt, who did not love him very much. He told about the little attic room where he slept, and of the rats that frightened him at night. He told about his being punished the night before for something he had not done, and then about the fairy who stood on the window-seat, and said he had been a good little

boy, and that she would show him how to have a pleasanter life.

Now, perhaps Mr. Smith thought that Harry had been dreaming about the fairy; but his daughter Grace was not

Harry Finds Himself a Very Lucky Boy.

too old to believe in fairies, and she could not take her eyes off the little fellow, as he described how beautiful the lady looked as she stood on the window-ledge, with her crown of gold and jewels, her wings of down and gossamer, her

robe of gold, and her ivory wand with the diamond set at its head.

Then Harry told of what the fairy had said he should do, and how carefully he had obeyed her; how he had thrown back the two wonderful big fishes into the brook and been beaten for it; how he had found the diamond in the third fish. The boy then explained how he had learned that the diamond belonged to Mr. Smith, and of his rough treatment when he tried to return it to the owner, until, just as matters were at their worst, little Grace came to his rescue.

But the end of all Harry's troubles had come. Mr. Smith said that such a brave and true and honest little boy was just the sort he would like to have always with him.

"You shall always live with me," he said, "and all that I can do for you I will."

So Harry's soiled clothes were put away, and pretty garments were bought for him. He went barefoot no more; he played in the beautiful grounds which he had admired so much, with the dear little girl who had been so kind to him, and all that was sad and miserable in his life was changed.

# STORY OF THE ENCHANTED CAVE.

HAROLD BARTON was the eldest of several children, and his father and mother were very poor. He was but fifteen years old, although a very large boy for his age, when one morning, his father being absent at his work, his mother called him into her room, and began to cry over him and kiss him at the same time, while she tried to talk.

"What are you saying, mother?" said Harold, "and what are you crying for?"

So his mother tried to dry her eyes, and sitting down on a chair, drew her big boy to her lap, and said, "Dear Harold, you know that your father and I are very poor, and we have hard work to buy food and clothes for our family. You are a big boy, my son, and we must send you away from us. Do you suppose that you can go out into the world all alone, without your mother's care?"

Harold was a brave boy, as well as a big one; and although he felt very sad at the thought of leaving his dear father and mother and brothers and sisters, he stopped the little sob in his throat, and replied, "Why, I ought to be big enough, mother. If I can do nothing else, you know

how well I can shoot with father's gun. If you will let me take that, I am sure that I need not go hungry."

"Your father feels as badly as I do to have you go, Harold, dear," she said; "but perhaps such a brave big boy as you can not only help yourself, but by and by help us and your little brothers and sisters also. We will try to

Harold is Sent Away From Home.

think of that. Yes, yes, my son; take your father's gun, which I know you can handle so well. Now good-by, my dear. Make haste, before your father comes back, and

before your little brothers and sisters wonder what I am talking to you so long about. I have your clothes all ready in a bundle; you know where your father's gun and

Harold Sets Out on His Travels.

powder and shot are. Go quickly, my son, before my heart breaks."

So it was that Harold went out into the great world to seek his fortune, with all his possessions in a bundle tied on the end of his gun, which was thrown over his shoulder. He did not look around until the turn in the road, where

he could catch the last glimpse of his home; then, as he looked back, he saw his mother still standing in the door, waving her hand to him.

For several days Harold tramped along the roads, sleeping at night under such cover as he could find in sheds, and sometimes under trees, for the weather was warm. He had plenty to eat; for when he was hungry all he had to do was to shoot a bird or a rabbit, and building a fire out of broken branches, cook as dainty a meal as a boy could ask for. As he passed from town to town, he kept asking those he met if they had work for a strong boy to do, but found none.

One night, after a long tramp through the woods, looking for some old shed or hut where he could sleep, he came to a cave in the side of a hill which he thought might have been once the den of some wild animal. It was just beginning to rain, and he was glad of any sort of cover. Being very tired, he threw himself down on a pile of leaves, which might have been the nest of some wild beast, and was soon sound asleep.

When the morning came, so much more light poured into the entrance of the cave that he could see about him; and, being of a curious disposition, he was not satisfied until he had carefully examined the cave on all sides. He had about made up his mind that, as long as nobody seemed to have any work for him to do, he would make his home here during the warm weather; and he was anxious to find out all about his new house. But in one corner of the cave the earth seemed much softer than anywhere else; and, pushing

Harold Sees the Entrance to the Cave.

his feet down into it, they seemed to sink into an opening below. It looked as if there must be another cave behind, with which this connected; and Harold lost no time in falling upon his knees, and digging the earth out with his hands, like a squirrel.

Very soon he had an opening large enough to admit his body, and crawled into a hole. It was entirely dark, but as he crept along, he found the space about and above him enlarge, until very soon he could stand upright; and, after groping his way for what seemed to him a long time, it

began to get lighter in the queer passage that he had discovered, and then he could make his way much faster. He was sure such a channel as this must lead to some place worth visiting; and as there was nothing at the beginning of the channel which he wanted to see any more of, he thought he could lose nothing by going ahead.

The light grew clearer and clearer, showing that the end was at hand. In a few steps more he leaped out into an open space, which could hardly be called a room, although it was very different from any cave that he had ever heard of. The rock overhead had been made almost as smooth as the ceiling of a room, and the different minerals which nature had put there glistened very brightly. The side walls were straight and smooth, except for several deep cracks, and were polished for quite a way up from the floor. The floor itself was covered with thick rugs of soft colors. He looked about to find what made the light, since no sunlight could enter such a cavern as this. He then saw that the light all came from a large number of queer little cups, on the top of which lighted wicks floated. He had seen pictures of just such lamps, which had been in use in the world thousands of years ago.

The room had no person in it when he entered; but there were various signs that not very long ago somebody had been there, and he thought it must have been a woman from the number of pillows and queer-looking musical instruments which he saw strewn about. But there was no such thing as a table in the room, or a chair; and he made

up his mind that anybody that lived there must be in the habit of sitting on the floor. Then he heard a soft rustling noise at an opening in the other side of the room, and a young girl came in. He had no time to notice more

Harold Midway in the Tunnel.

than that she was dressed as he had never before seen a girl dressed, and that she looked to be not far from his own age; for the moment that she saw him she gave a loud cry, and if she had not seemed to be such a healthy young woman, he would have expected to see her faint away.

Of course she spoke first, but in such a language as he had never heard before. The words seemed to run very close together, although, for that matter, he had noticed

Harold Sees the Princess.

the same habit in the talk of the girls he had known before; but in a strange language it seems as if the words run all together. He listened as best he could, trying if he might not catch one word which he had ever heard before, and discovered the familiar "Oh!" and "Ah!" which showed that the girl was very much excited as well as frightened.

It was quite a while before she stopped her flow of words, and then she seemed to want to hear from him; and Harold, taking warning from her rapidity of speech, tried to speak very slowly, saying, "This is a very funny house that you have here. I hope I am not in the way. Do you want me to go away?"

He could see that the girl could not understand his words any better than he had understood hers; but when he made a motion toward the opening through which he had come, then she seemed to see that he was offering to leave her, and the idea seemed to strike her very favorably. She crossed quickly to where he stood, and taking him by the arm, gently pushed him toward the door through which he had come, if it could be called a door.

Now, Harold was a very polite young fellow, and did not want to stay where he was not wanted; and, although he felt very unwilling to leave so strange a place without knowing more about it, and, although the more he remembered of the outside world the less pleasant did it seem to him, yet he made up his mind to go.

But before he had gone more than three or four steps her hand tightened on his arm, and she stopped him. It seems that young ladies, even in the middle of the earth, have a habit of changing their minds. She drew him back towards the centre of the room again, still talking as fast as human tongue could go. As long as Harold could not understand a word she was saying, he made the best of his chance to look a little closer at his new friend. Instead of

shoes she wore pieces of leather just covering the soles of her feet, and held in place by cords. Her ankles were bare. She wore a long flowing garment, caught loosely a little above her waist; there were no sleeves on it, but her arms were ornamented with beautiful gold bracelets. Her hair fell in ringlets, and was held away from her forehead by a very pretty band. She had beautiful brown eyes; and, although her cheeks were anything but rosy, they were as clear as marble.

By the time he had finished looking her over, the young lady had stopped talking, and was waiting for him to say something else that she could not understand.

Harold saw it did not make much difference what he said; but since he seemed to be expected to say something, he remarked, "What a beautiful dress you have, and what a nice little girl you are! I only wish we talked the same way, so that we could understand each other." Then Harold smiled; and a smile being the same in all languages, his new friend was not slow to understand that.

Reaching out her hand, she took his, and seemed to be asking him to sit down. Being a very accommodating boy, he was about to drop down on the floor, when she set him an example by taking possession of one of the cushions, and, drawing another near her, touched it with her hand, and smiled at him; and a very sweet smile the little girl had.

If they were to get along at all together, Harold saw that the first necessity was to know what to call each other.

So, seeing how useful signs had been so far, he pointed pleasantly to himself, and said, " Harold."

She smiled again, and seemed to understand him, and tried to say his name over after him. After two or three trials she succeeded pretty well. Then she pointed to her-

Harold and Alice Getting Acquainted.

self, and said a word which Harold concluded was her name. But it was not so easy to pronounce as his, at least for him, and the nearest he could get to it was " Alice."

She seemed very much amused at his failure to pronounce her name aright, and tried to say it after him the way he did. It seemed settled at last that they should call each other Harold and Alice.

Then an idea seemed to strike Alice; and after another of her little speeches, which meant something in her own language, but meant nothing to Harold, she ran out of the room, only to return shortly with a large platter covered with nice things to eat. There was some cold meat, — lamb, Harold thought it must be, — some kind of queer-looking vegetable which he had never seen before, something which looked a little like bread, and a cup of milk. There was no doubt about the milk.

Harold, having had nothing to eat since noon of the day before, was very hungry; and, as Alice seemed to enjoy watching him, he kept on eating until the platter was clean. Then for the first time he noticed that the dishes were of pure gold; and he began to think that perhaps the fortune which had looked so far away yesterday might be close at hand after all. He had apparently made the acquaintance of an heiress.

He had hardly finished his meal, however, when he heard a noise like a very heavy tread. Alice heard it too, and looking much frightened, caught him quickly by the arm, and led him once more toward the opening through which he had come. But this time Harold was not nearly so willing to go, and he hung back, heedless of her beseeching looks and excited words. At last, giving up the idea

of getting him out by the way he had come, she drew him hastily across the room and up the passage through which she herself had entered; and, when they had reached a very dark opening in the rocky wall of the cavern, she pushed him hastily into it, saying words which no doubt meant, "Stay there, or you will be sorry for it."

Then she ran quickly back into the larger room, leaving him to himself. For a minute after she had gone everything looked very dark to Harold in his retreat; then he noticed in one side of the room or den, whichever one might call it, a little glimmer of light; and making his way very carefully to it, he found the light came through a deep crack in the solid rock, through which he could see into the large room to which Alice had returned.

The sound of approaching footsteps grew louder and louder. He felt for his gun, and made certain that it was ready for use if necessary. Then he looked again. He could see Alice standing in the middle of the room, with both hands pressed tightly on her bosom, just as he had seen his mother when anything was going very wrong, with her face turned in the direction from which the sound, growing louder every moment, seemed to come. He was more sorry for Alice than anxious for himself. Suddenly the little girl appeared to think of a better plan; and she had just time to throw herself on one of the cushions, when a great form stood in one corner of the room.

Harold had read about giants; but he had not supposed they were such terrible things to look at until he saw this

enormous man, almost twice as large as his father, with great legs like the pillars of a house, and arms like the branches of an oak-tree. His face was covered with a long beard; he wore a strange peaked hat, and his clothes seemed to be made of leather. His legs were bare below the knee, and on his feet he wore the same sort of queer things that he had seen on Alice's little feet. Harold waited nervously to hear the giant's voice, but to his relief it was not at all gruff, although it seemed to fill the whole room like the bass notes of an organ. He spoke in the same strange language which Alice had used, and, from his manner, Harold supposed that he said, "How do you do?" or some such thing.

It was long afterwards before Harold learned the language which seemed so strange to him now, but there is no reason for us to wait as long as Harold had to, so I will give the talk of the giant and Alice as it took place.

"Ah, my little one!" said the giant; "have you been lonesome while I was away?"

"Why, no," she said, her voice still trembling with excitement. "I did not think you had been gone very long."

"Not gone very long!" he answered. "Why, it was early morning when I went away, and it is afternoon now. But you seem excited, my dear; what has happened to you?"

"Oh, nothing," she said hurriedly. "Oh, nothing at all!"

The giant looked about the room and then back at her.

"The room is turned topsy-turvy," he said, "as if you had been playing some game."

The Giant Comes in.

"Oh, yes!" she cried, trying to laugh; "I have been trying to amuse myself."

"And been eating, too," said the giant, looking at the plates and dishes. "You did not wait for me."

"Oh, no! I was so hungry."

"Well, well," he said, throwing himself down on a long row of cushions, lying in one corner, "I am hungry, too. Bring me what there is to eat."

Then Alice hurried along the passageway, past the little den where Harold was watching. He crept to the door, hoping that she would speak to him as she passed, but she only put her finger to her lips, and, as the light fell on her face, he saw that she looked more frightened than ever. Soon she returned, bearing another gold platter in her hands, heaped high with some such food as Harold had so much enjoyed, but enough it seemed to him for a whole family at least.

Much as there was, the giant did not seem to have enough, and, after drinking six great cups of milk, he called for more.

"There is no more," said Alice.

When Harold saw the giant hold out his empty cup, he knew that he was asking for more milk, and he remembered that, having been very thirsty himself, he had made Alice fill his cup for him — a much smaller one, of course — half a dozen times before he was satisfied.

"No more milk!" exclaimed the giant, more gruffly. "But I am sure there was more than this in the cave."

"I was so thirsty," whimpered Alice, tears of fright running down her face.

"And a little thing like you drank up all that milk!" he said; "you must have spilled it."

Now Alice, not having had the best of bringing up,

thought it no harm to tell lies. "Yes," she said, "I did spill it; and I was afraid you would be angry."

"Well, never mind," he said; "I will take a nap now."

And, rolling over on his pillows, in a few moments he was sound asleep. Harold's father had a bad habit of snoring, which had always caused his wife a great deal of distress, and no little complaint in the family, but such snoring as this the boy had not supposed possible. It almost seemed to shake the mountain over the cavern. But for all that, Harold found no fault. It was a great relief to him to have such good proof that the giant was out of the way of doing any mischief for a little while at least.

Like most boys of his age, he was somewhat reckless; and no sooner was the giant asleep than Harold made his way out of his little den, back through the corridor, and suddenly stood before the very eyes of Alice, who, for a moment, looked too frightened to speak.

But little girls, like big ones, admire courage, and, after a few whispered words, which he supposed to be in the nature of a scolding, she stole another glance at the giant, to be certain that he was sound asleep, and taking Harold's hand, led him back along the corridor to another room quite a way off. When they had reached this place she began a long speech to him, not a word of which he could understand, which he answered with one not quite as long, which she could not understand any better.

Alice was a quick-witted little girl, and she saw at once that they must learn each other's language, and the sooner

the work was begun the better. So, laying her hand on a cushion, she said some words which, in her language, meant "cushion," and Harold tried to say it after her. Then he put his hand on the cushion, and gave its name in

The Giant Takes His After Dinner Nap.

his language. After knowing each other for several hours, these two young people had at last learned three words which they could both understand. Then Alice went on, putting her hand on various objects in the room, giving the names in her language; and, after Harold had repeated

them, he gave the names of the same things in his language, and she said them over after him.

Time went very fast, for the lesson was much more pleasant than any that Harold had ever had at school, when the sound of the heavy tread of the giant was again heard, this time at the head of the corridor. But Alice had been expecting it, and had already shown the boy a nice place to hide, behind a pile of skins which lay in one corner. So, by the time the giant entered the room, Alice appeared to be very busy putting things in order. The giant did not stay long. It seemed he only came to tell her that he was going out to work again.

No sooner had he gone than the lessons were resumed, and Alice's work was put off until some other time. When it grew late, she told the boy to take a pile of the lamb-skins, all covered with wool on one side, and make a soft bed for himself in the little den where she had first put him. She then handed him another platter filled with things to eat, but was careful this time to give him water instead of milk, and when the giant came back again Harold was sound asleep, although fortunately he did not snore, and Alice was busy getting the giant's supper for him, as she had done so many times before.

The next day everything was arranged very nicely. Harold's breakfast was waiting for him as soon as the giant went out; and, after a morning spent with Alice in studying, he had plenty of time to eat a comfortable dinner before the giant, whose name he found to be Dor, came for his

meal. While Dor was taking his after-dinner nap, the lessons were resumed again, being only interrupted when he came to announce that he was going back to his work.

So it went on from day to day, and from week to week, and month to month. Harold had never had such a nice time in his life before, and both he and Alice seemed to have quite gotten over any fear of the terrible things which might happen if the giant should find the boy. They had both learned enough of each other's language so that they could begin to talk together a little. But it was only long afterwards that Harold understood all about the strange history of Dor and Alice.

It seemed that, many thousands of years before, Alice was a little girl, the daughter of a great king. Dor thought a great deal of the child, and finally asked the king to promise her to him for his wife when she should grow up. The king became very angry, and told the giant that if he ever came into the palace again he would be killed. But Dor was a very determined giant, and, since the king refused him so scornfully for a son-in-law, he determined to steal the little girl away, and keep her until she should be old enough to be married. So one day, when Alice was playing in the grounds about the palace with no one watching, he rushed in quickly, and, catching her in his arms, hurried away with her.

Now, Alice had known the giant ever since she was a baby, and, as he had always been kind to her, and often carried her on his back, she liked him very much; so when

he took her up this afternoon and ran away with her, she thought it was part of a joke, and instead of crying out, she only laughed and enjoyed it.

But, as the giant kept on running, covering miles very fast with his long legs, she began to get frightened, and asked to go home. Then Dor told her a falsehood, about taking her to some beautiful place where her aunt wanted to see her. The giant well knew that Alice's father would follow him with all his army, so he hardly stopped to breathe until he came to the shore of a great sea. There a ship was waiting for him, with sailors whom he had hired with a great deal of money. The ship sailed many days and weeks before it came to land. Alice, you may be sure, was glad to see the green earth once more; but she knew now that she would never see her home again, as the giant had told her that he had taken her away to keep her until she had grown up, when she must be his wife.

Whatever happened to the ship and the sailors Alice never knew, but the next morning after she had landed there was no ship in sight. Then the giant took her through this strange new country, killing animals for their food as he went, or taking what he chose from the wild people whom they met. She often asked him where they were going.

"On! on!" was all he said, until one day they came to a sort of cave in the side of a hill, and, going in there out of reach of the storm which was driving outside, they found it was only the entrance to a long passageway in the side of

the hill, and at the end were pleasant rooms cut out of the solid rock, and full of beautiful things. She thought it must have been the home of some wonderful magician, who had laid a spell upon it, since, although they had been there so many thousands of years, the giant had seemed to grow no older, nor had she, than either was the first day that they came in there, and even the clothes they wore did not wear out. The giant was rather stupid, and did not seem to notice the years as they went by, nor to wonder that this little girl whom he had taken away from her home so long, long ago, did not grow nor come any nearer to the time when she could become his wife.

One day, after Harold and Alice had learned each other's language so well that they could make themselves understood, he said he was going to see where the giant went every morning after breakfast. So, taking his gun in his hand, he started after Dor, keeping near enough so that he would not miss him in the winding channel, but far enough away so that if the giant looked back he could not see that he was being followed.

It was not a short walk, and Harold had been so long without any exercise that he became very tired before a light, different from anything which he had seen in the enchanted cave, began to shine dimly ahead. Then the heavy steps of Dor ceased to echo in the passageway, and Harold knew that he must have passed out into an open space. Following cautiously, the boy saw, to his great surprise, that Dor had stepped out into a little valley, which lay very

low between high mountains, where there was a garden, with fruits and vegetables growing, while near by a flock of sheep and half a dozen cattle were eating grass. Standing a little back in the shadow of the passageway, so that he could not be seen, Harold watched Dor going about his morning's work, weeding the garden with a strange-looking hoe, and milking the cows. Then he saw him call one of the little lambs, and kill and skin it, and cut the meat up into pieces convenient to carry.

The giant seemed to be getting ready to return with his load, so the boy waited no longer, but made his own way back to the cave as fast as possible.

Harold found Alice waiting by the door, peering eagerly up the passage, and listening for the sound of footsteps. She seemed very glad to see him, but was too wise and kind a little girl to put him in any danger by asking questions then, and only hurried the boy quickly into his own little den, as the steps of the giant could be heard approaching very rapidly down the passageway.

But when the giant took his afternoon nap, Alice lost no time in leading Harold out into the kitchen, and asking him questions much faster than he could answer them. Poor little girl! Shut up in this cave for so many thousands of years, with nothing to think of, and nothing to inquire about! You may guess how interested she was in the wonderful things which Harold told her about the giant's trip, and how he had passed the forenoon.

No sooner had Dor arisen from his nap the next after-

noon, and started in another direction for what he called his work, than Harold again followed him. This journey was not so long as the other, and there was no daylight at the other end of it, either.

After the giant had walked a little way in the dark he stopped, and taking one of the strange-looking lamps from

The Giant in His Treasure Chamber.

a niche in the rocky wall, lighted it. Harold stopped when Dor stopped, and when Dor started again the boy started after him, but more carefully. He did not want to get too

near to the giant, but, on the other hand, he was afraid lest he might lose his way entirely. At several of the sharp turns in the winding corridor the giant would certainly have seen the boy if he had thought to look behind. Harold concluded that Dor had been so long without visitors in his wonderful cavern that he had almost forgotten there could be any one else in the whole world but just himself and little Alice.

At last the giant came to a room cut out of the solid rock, but with the same queer cracks in the side which the boy had noticed in the other rooms. He lighted a score of lamps, until the room was as light as day; and Harold then saw something which made his eyes almost jump out of his head. In the middle of the room were two piles of glistening diamonds, rubies, pearls, and sapphires, sparkling like stars. One pile was very large, the other much smaller. But in the smaller pile were gems enough to make every woman in the world happy. On a side wall were strange marks, which the boy afterwards understood were put there by Dor as he worked.

Then the giant began his task, which Harold thought must be a very pleasant one. It was nothing but taking the jewels from the big pile, and putting them on the smaller one, counting them as he did so. The figures on the wall were made by the giant as he counted. Harold did not dare to wait an instant after the giant arose from his work, although he was almost wild with excitement and curiosity, but, turning about, swiftly made his way back, and, passing

Alice with only a quick, "Hush!" rushed into his own little den and lay very still.

Almost at once the giant came in with a strange look on his face. "I am sure I heard a noise. Have you been out this way, Alice?"

"Oh, no!" she said. "I have only been into the kitchen. I never dare to come after you."

"But I am sure I heard a footstep," he whispered hoarsely.

"It must have been the echo," suggested Alice.

"It wasn't as loud as an echo of my footsteps, but was more like the patter of a girl or a boy," answered Dor.

Alice did not know what to say, but looked very much frightened. The giant naturally concluded that she was as much afraid as he of an intruder, and had not the slightest suspicion that she knew anything more about those mysterious footsteps than he did. He was a kind-hearted giant, too, and when he saw her terror he forgot all about his own fears, and did his best to comfort her, in his own clumsy fashion, saying that very likely he was mistaken, for surely no one could have come along the passageway without her seeing him, which was very true.

"If you hear any more sounds," he said, "or see anything that looks as if some one from the outside world has been down, you must let me know."

Then she set his supper before him, and, after eating everything in sight, as usual, he began to tell her about the people in the outside world.

"They are very bad people," he said, "and if they ever came in here they would take away from us all we have to eat and wear, all our gold and jewels, and drive us out to starve."

"It is a miserable place outside," he added. "I remember it very well, although you were only a little girl when we left it, and have probably forgotten all about it. It is either too hot or too cold there all the time, very few people have enough to eat or to wear, and everybody is always trying to hurt everybody else. This is the only place to live in happiness, my dear. Now, if you would only grow up, so that we could be married. I don't see why it takes you so long. As I think of it, you look just as young now as you did when I brought you here, so very long ago. I don't understand it at all."

But Dor was a stupid giant, and, although he could lift very heavy weights, and twist a piece of iron as if it were lead pipe, or take a man under each arm and run a mile with him, if necessary, any child of ten years old, who had been to school, was better at thinking than he. So he very quickly grew tired of using his brains, and, saying it must be bedtime, threw himself on his cushions and went to sleep.

But Alice could hardly sleep at all that night, for wonder at what Dor had told her of the outside world, which she remembered very little about. No sooner had he gone in the morning than Harold came out of his little den, and, almost as soon as the boy had finished his breakfast, she

made him tell her everything he could about the sort of people that lived in the world which was above them, and whether it was really all as bad as Dor had said.

Harold did not know exactly where to begin, but he told her about himself and his own home, and how poor his father and mother were, and how hard it was for them to get enough to eat and to wear.

"Then Dor is right," she said. "It is far better down here."

But then he told her about the wonderful sun which shone by day, which she had forgotten all about, it had been so many thousands of years since she had seen it. He tried to describe the beautiful trees and flowers, and lovely green meadows, the silvery rivers, the blue waves of the ocean, the fleecy clouds, the bright stars and the moon which shone at night. Then he told of the birds which sang in the trees, the animals that roamed over the fields, the beautiful houses and the wonderful things which they contained.

He explained to her, too, that in the outside world little girls grew to be women, and boys to be men, and that, although there was much trouble and care and pain, yet the true and the brave did not usually come to harm.

"Oh, I am sure I would like it!" she cried. "Can't you take me out?"

Then Harold answered: "I have been thinking very hard since yesterday, and I mean to take you away from this enchanted cave, and lead you home to my parents."

"Oh, how happy I shall be!" she said, and clapped her hands.

"Yes," answered the boy, "but we must not go empty handed. My parents were too poor to take care of me alone; they can hardly provide for two of us."

"What shall we do, then?" she asked, clasping her hands over her bosom again after her fashion.

"Why, my dear Alice," he answered, "I now know where there are heaps of jewels, and if I can only take one little bag of them, we can go out and be happy ever after."

"But how can we escape?" she asked eagerly.

"There are only two ways that I can think of," he replied. "One is to drive the giant out, and the other is to kill him."

"Kill him!" she exclaimed. "What is that?"

And again Harold did not know how to explain to her. Living in an enchanted cave, where one never even grew old, the child had no idea what death meant. He kept silent for some minutes, while he tried to think how to explain it to her.

"I could kill him," he finally answered, "by shooting him with this gun. In the gun is a bullet, a round ball, which, when I pull the trigger, will go out of the gun so fast that if it struck him in the heart or in the head he would fall over and become just like a piece of this rock, and would never get up again."

"But I should hate to have him hurt," she said sadly. "He has been kind to me."

"You must make clothes that will cover your arms and your ankles and your feet, so that you will not be cold, and so that people will not stare too curiously at you when you go outside. How long will it take you to do that?"

"You must first tell me what to do," she said.

So Harold tried to tell her something about the sort of clothes which girls wore in the outside world, and, being a very bright little girl, she understood quickly what he meant.

"I will begin at once," she answered. "Perhaps in two or three days I shall be ready."

It was then almost time for the giant to return, so the boy retired to his little den and waited until afternoon before carrying out his plans. When the giant had again started for his afternoon's work, Harold left Alice to her new task, and made his way slowly back along the corridor through which he had come, to the entrance, clearing away pieces of rock and rubbish as he passed along, and trying to make the passage large enough for even the giant to pass through. When he reached the little nest where he had slept that night, months ago, so cold and hungry, he could hardly believe the wonderful things that had happened since. Spending the night there, he began slowly to work his way back, and you may well believe that Alice was very glad to see him again. When he told her where he had been, and what he had been doing, she was so excited that her cheeks became almost rosy, for once.

"It will take me several days yet," he said, "to make

the passage large enough for the giant to get out, for that is the way that I want to drive him."

"But how will you drive him? He is so large. He is much stronger and bigger than you."

"I will tell you bye and bye. My work in the passage is not finished; but this time," he said, "I shall be gone two or three days, so give me enough food to last."

Before Harold came back again he had made the channel wide enough and tall enough for the giant to pass through. When he returned he found Alice had finished her clothing, according to the ideas which he had given her, and when she put it on and waited for him to praise her, he told her that she was a wonderful girl. There was only a short time left before the giant might be expected to return for his midday meal, and Harold hurried to explain to Alice what to do next.

"When the giant comes," he said, "you must tell him that some one has come from the outside world. He will want to know where he is, so that he can kill him. But you must say to him that this person who has come has a magic piece of iron with him, from which fire pours out when he says the word, and a ball goes to just the point he orders, and that no one, no matter how big a giant, can stand before him. He will tell you he does not believe it, but you must say that the person who has come does not want to kill him unless he has to, and that he says he will first show what the magic bar of iron will do. And if Dor does not then believe it, he must die. If he should be

satisfied that the gun will kill him, he must then promise to go out of the cave right away, and to never come back."

Alice was very much frightened at the message which had been given her, but, carefully taking off her new clothes,

Alice in Her New Fashioned Clothes.

and putting on her old ones again, she waited listening for the footsteps of the giant, while Harold, after looking carefully at his gun, to see that it was all right, went back to his little den, waiting for the moment to arrive which should settle everything.

Then the resounding tread of Dor was heard along the passageway, and in a moment more his enormous form stood in the room. Alice was trembling in every limb.

"You said I must tell you," she began, "when any person from the outside world came."

"Yes, yes!" he cried; "and what have you to say?"

"Some one has come," she answered.

"Where is he? Where is he?" And, catching a great bar of iron from the side of the wall, he looked fiercely about him for the intruder.

"Let me explain first," she said. "He is a wonderful magician, and it is of no use for you to fight against him with your bar of iron, for he has a bar of iron far mightier than yours."

"Is he a giant too," asked Dor, hesitating; "and larger than I?"

"No. No."

"Where is he, then," cried the giant, "that I may crush him to powder?"

"Ah, Dor! but the magic bar of iron which he has with him is one that he does not have to swing in the air, but simply points, and fire comes out from it at a word, and you fall dead before him."

"And did he tell you this?" cried Dor. "It is a lie."

"Wait," said Alice, "until I tell you more. He is kind, as well as powerful, and does not want to kill you if you will go away out of the cave in peace."

"Away out of my own cave," shouted Dor, "and leave you here to him? I will never do it."

"Then he will have to kill you."

Harold About to Shoot.

"But he cannot kill me," answered the giant boastfully. "I could fight a hundred little men. Where is he?"

"Wait!" she cried again. "When I say the word he will come forth and show you the power of his wonderful bar of iron, and you shall see what it will do."

Now, the giant was afraid of magic, for in the old time

when he was on the earth there was much more talk of it than there is nowadays; so he said at last, "If he is a magician there is of course no use to fight against him. Let us see his wonderful bar of iron, and what he can do with it."

At this Harold came out of his little den, and stood in the doorway with his gun in his hand. Alice had arranged a lamp close by the giant's side, on a niche in the rock, and Harold, raising his gun, aimed at the lamp. The boy had told her just what to say to the giant, who had already grasped his iron bar in his hand, and made as if to rush on Harold. "He will show you," cried Alice, "that he can point his bar of iron at that lamp, and, at a word, the fire will pour out of his bar, and the lamp will be shattered into pieces. Shall he say the word?"

"Yes," said the giant, "let him say the word."

So the boy called at the top of his voice, although his voice sounded almost like a whisper compared with that of Dor in his wrath, "Now!" and, pulling the trigger, the fire and smoke poured from the muzzle, and the lamp was shattered into pieces as it stood right by the giant's head.

Quickly slipping another cartridge into its place, Harold turned the gun and pointed it at the giant. "Ask him," said Harold, "whether I shall kill him, or will he go?"

But the giant only gave one frightened glance at the weapon pointed at him, and, throwing his bar of iron on the floor, shouted in a loud voice, "Which way? I have

forgotten!" Harold pointed to the passage which he had prepared. Rushing to its entrance, Dor paused a moment to cast one look at Alice.

"And shall I never see you again?" he asked.

"Tell him, 'perhaps,'" said the boy.

"Perhaps you may," she answered softly, almost sorry for old Dor. Then the giant hesitated, and made as if to leap at Harold again, but the boy was not willing to take any chances, and, aiming at another lamp which stood at the entrance to the passageway, he once more pulled the trigger, the flame poured forth again, and that lamp too was shattered.

The giant hesitated no longer, but rushed out and along the corridor like a whirlwind.

"Now, put on your new clothes quickly," said Harold, "while I go and collect as many jewels as we can take with us."

It was a half hour before Harold came back with a bag filled from the pile of gems in the little treasure chamber, and then, hand in hand, leaving the lamps still burning in the cave, the two children started out through the passageway along which the giant had gone a little while before them.

They had taken only a few steps when a loud rumbling was heard behind, and Alice, looking around in terror, clung closely to Harold, and they both stopped for an instant.

"The hill must be settling down on the cavern," he

said. "You remember those great cracks? We came out none too soon."

They waited no longer, for the noise grew louder and louder, until it became almost deafening, and, as Harold glanced back, he saw the lights in the cave go out. This

The Giant Consents to Go.

showed that the hill had settled down into the very room where they had been standing a few seconds before.

Taking a firmer hold of the hand of the trembling girl, he ran along still faster, fairly dragging her after him, and

even then the rocks fell so quickly behind them that no sooner had they taken a step forward than some pieces of broken rock dropped in their footprints, and, as they burst through at last into the outer cave, the opening through which they had come was closed almost as soon as they had passed through it.

They did not stop a moment in the outside cave, but hurried into the woods. Then Alice could stand no longer, but sank, almost fainting, beneath the nearest tree, and Harold, bold and strong a boy as he was, trembled in every limb.

It was indeed a narrow escape they had had. If the giant had been near at the time, he would have felt like thanking Harold for driving him away from the cave, which, if they had remained there only a few moments longer, would have been their common tomb.

The boy and girl rested under the tree for quite a time, listening to the terrible rumblings underneath the hill, hardly daring to think how nearly they had been buried inside of it. But soon the rumblings ceased, and, the children recovering from their terror and fatigue, Alice began asking questions about the wonderful things which she saw about her, so different from anything she had known in her life in the cave; and Harold did his best to answer her questions about the trees, the wild flowers, the green grass, the blue sky, the birds, the sunlight, and the brooks.

"But we must hurry on," he said. "We have very far to go before we reach my mother."

Soon they came into a village, where Alice saw no end of people, and was so much astonished that she could not speak. Harold asked the way to his old home, and when he was told how far away it was, and he looked at his delicate companion, he knew that she could not stand so long a walk. Then he remembered the jewels which he had about him, and it came over him that there was no need for them to walk when tired, or to do any disagreeable thing again as long as they lived. A small gem was sufficient to hire a very nice carriage for them both, and to buy plenty of food for their journey, and they started on what Alice always remembered afterward as the loveliest trip of her life.

Everything was new, everything seemed beautiful to Alice. The brave boy who had saved her was by her side; she had no fear for the future, and all her long past seemed like an almost forgotten dream to her.

At last the carriage drew near a little cottage, the poorest in a whole village, and, after Harold had helped Alice out, the two children walked up the well-worn path to the home where Harold was born.

He had hardly put his foot on the step, when the door swung open, and his mother rushed to meet him. She took her son in her arms, and hugged him as if she would never let him go. Tears of joy ran down her cheeks, while she vainly tried to ask questions which no one could understand, and which she gave him no time to answer.

At last she seemed to notice that a pretty little girl was

standing by him, smiling sweetly, and as much interested in the meeting as if it were herself who was being hugged and kissed.

Alice Takes Her First Carriage Ride.

"And who is this, my son?" she said.

"This is Alice," Harold answered, "my new friend; and whom I want you to take as your daughter."

"What a dear little girl!" cried his mother, kissing her. "And where did you find her, my son?"

"It is a long story, mother," he said. "After we are

rested I will tell you. We have travelled a long way to-day."

Then she took them inside the little house, and, seating them both on a bench, bustled about to find something for them to eat.

Harold and Alice Welcomed Home.

And all his brothers and sisters came hurrying in, and all had to hug their brother, and kiss their new sister, and ask hundreds of questions which there was no chance to answer.

But while his mother had been out of the room, she had had a chance to think, and to wonder where the food was coming from to feed her hungry boy who had returned, to say nothing of the little girl whom he had brought with him. As she remembered the clothes that they both wore, she saw no signs of any fortune, and it was a very sorrowful woman that she was as she came back to them again.

"There is nothing in the house to eat," she said, "even for us, to say nothing of Harold and this dear little girl. What a sad home-coming this is, after all!"

Then all the brothers and sisters began to whimper and cry, and the father's face fell as he turned it away in grief.

This was Harold's chance, and, rising from the bench, he drew his bag from beside him, and showed its store of jewels.

"I have found my fortune," he said, "enough for me, little Alice, and you all. We shall never know hunger or want again."

That was a happy household that night.

In a few years Harold had grown to manhood, and Alice, taken away from the enchanted cave, had at last become a woman. Of course they were married, and lived happily ever after.

They had been married only a year when a circus came to town, with wonderful curiosities to show, and the whole family left the grand house, in which they now lived, and

Harold and Alice See the Giant Again.

went to see the show. In a side tent a giant was on exhibition, and being especially interested in giants, Harold and Alice went in to see him.

What was their surprise to find that the giant was no other than their old friend, Dor whose long whiskers had been cut off, and who now wore the ordinary clothes of people of the day, and had become a very fat and happy looking giant indeed.

Without telling him who they were, Harold and Alice

got him to talking, and he told them that he was married, and insisted on sending out to bring in his wife.

"I chose her," he said, "because she looked like a little girl whom I loved very dearly many years ago, but who never seemed to grow old enough to be married."

But when his wife was brought in she turned out to be a very fat and clumsy looking woman, who looked no more like Alice than like the man in the moon.

# STORY OF THE BAD BOY.

SAMMY HAWKINS was a very bad boy. Everybody said so. He had not a friend in the world, unless you counted his elder brother, with whom he lived, and who was fully as bad as himself.

I dislike to mention the bad things that Sammy did. He was a dirty boy; he loved dirt, and hated to wash himself. He was a cruel boy. It was sport to him to torment dumb animals and little girls and boys. He never told the truth, even when it would be just as useful to him as a lie; he seemed to love a lie because it was one. He was a thief, and was in the habit of taking everything which he could lay his hands on, whether he had any use for it or not. He loved to use bad language, and hardly any of the words he ever used were such as could be repeated here.

Sammy enjoyed throwing stones at cats and dogs, or, if he caught them, tying tin cans to their tails and watching their misery and terror. He found pleasure in picking quarrels, and striking and scratching other boys. He often amused himself by being rude to little girls, tearing their

clothes, pulling their hats off, and plaguing them as only bad boys know how to do.

He had very little to eat, and not enough clothes to keep him warm in cool weather; no one had kind words for him; everybody looked upon him as a little thief and rascal; but he took his satisfaction in making other people miserable.

Sammy Had Not a Friend in the World.

The neighbors used to get together evenings and talk about naughty Sammy Hawkins, and wonder in what jail he would be shut up when he grew a little older. Whipping

seemed to do him no good, scolding only made him laugh; every day he grew naughtier, until boys ran away from him when they saw him on the street, little girls screamed when he came near them, and older people watched to see what mischief he might be about whenever he came their way. He was altogether the worst boy that was ever seen in the village; and people were only waiting anxiously for the time when he was old enough to shut up behind the bars.

One night, when Sammy came home from a day of naughtiness, he found his brother away. He was not surprised at this, as his brother often came home very late at night, but when the boy awoke in the morning and saw no signs of his brother, he thought it was time to ask some questions. His brother had broken into a house, and had been taken to jail; and the neighbors told Sammy that it would be many years before he saw him again. But Sammy knew how to steal, too, and thought he would be able to get all he wanted to eat, so, as his brother had not been any too kind to him, the boy did not care if he never saw him again.

Now the fairies had been watching Sammy for a long time. Fairies do not generally care anything about bad boys, but, for some reason, they had always watched Sammy, and who knows but he might have been killed long ago in some of his mad pranks if it had not been for them. And now that he was left without any sort of a human friend or protector they made up their minds that the time had come for them to see what they could do for him. Everybody

else had given him up. He seemed to be pointed in the straight path for the jail where his elder brother had gone, and certain to grow up a worse man than he had been a boy.

The Fairies Hold a Meeting.

The first thing to do was to get hold of him, and, knowing his disposition, one of them changed herself into a little white dog, with a pretty gold bell about her neck, and trotted up and down in front of Sammy's lodging. No sooner had the boy come out of his door than his eyes

lighted on the pretty animal. If the dog had not worn a bell Sammy would have chased her out of mere mischief, but when he noticed the bell he was sure it was something that he might sell if he could get it. So he lost no time in running after the animal as fast as his legs would take him.

The dog trotted along quite slowly, and Sammy thought she must be either tired or sick, and that it would be a very easy thing to catch her. But when he quickened his gait the dog seemed to quicken hers, keeping just the same distance between them all the time.

In running and walking Sammy had passed over several miles, expecting almost every minute to overtake the queer little animal that trotted along in front of him, but, finally getting out of temper, he made up his mind to kill her. So, picking up some big stones from the roadside, he began to throw them at her as fast as he could. He was a very good marksman, but somehow he could not hit this dog; no matter how straight he threw a stone it seemed to turn aside just before it reached her. Then he again started forward after the remarkable animal, which again trotted ahead just fast enough to keep out of the boy's reach.

And so it kept on all that day. When the boy stopped, the dog stopped. When Sammy started, the dog started. Sometimes he tried to call her to him by soft words, but she only barked and still kept her distance. Finally, as night was coming on, he began to think it was time to go back home again, but when he came to look about him

he found that he was in a country he had never seen before. He had no idea he had come so far.

Just as Sammy was about turning around to go home,

Sammy Comes to a Marble Palace.

very much out of temper to think that he had not succeeded in catching or killing the animal, a beautiful marble palace came in sight. A long flight of marble steps led up to the doorway, which was wide open. The dog ran up the steps and through the door, and Sammy never saw her again. He was a curious boy, and was very unwilling

to go home without finding out what sort of a place this was that he had come upon. So he climbed the marble steps, and, when he reached the open door, finding no one there, he went inside, hoping, naughty boy that he was, that he might find something which he could steal. But when he entered the open door it closed behind him, and, for the first time in his life, he felt rather uneasy. He went back and tried the door, but was unable to open it. Just then he heard steps on the grand staircase, and a beautiful lady, dressed in silks, her fingers glistening with diamonds, appeared in sight, and in a moment stood before him.

"I am so glad you have come," she said. "You must be tired."

She put out her beautiful white hand, and took his own rough one in it, just as if he had not been a dirty and bad little boy. Sammy did not know what to say, so, showing a wisdom lacked by many persons older and better than he, he said nothing.

"You must be hungry," she went on.

"Yes, I am," said Sammy.

"Dinner is all ready for you," she answered. "It has been waiting for an hour."

It was the first time in the boy's life that dinner had ever been waiting for him, and he did not know what to make of it. But it suddenly occurred to him, as he looked at the white hands and beautiful clothes of his hostess, that he was hardly fit to sit down to a meal with such as she.

"Perhaps you would like to go to the bath-room before dinner?" she said. Sammy did not know what a bath-room was, but he thought as long as everything was being made so pleasant for him, it would be best for him to answer "Yes" to whatever was suggested.

The Fairies Give Sammy Royal Welcome.

Then the lady rang a bell, and a boy, dressed in a blue suit with brass buttons, came along the hall.

"Show this young gentleman to the bath-room," said the lady, "and then bring him to dinner."

As Sammy, feeling very proud to be called a gentleman, followed the boy, he remarked carelessly, "Pretty nice place this!"

"Yes, sir," answered the boy. No one had ever said "sir" to Sammy before, and it took his breath away, so that he could make no more talk.

"This is the bath-room, sir," said the boy in blue, at last, holding a door open for Sammy to enter. "I will wait for you outside."

The little room which he entered had a porcelain bath-tub in it, with soft towels hanging on the racks, and sweet-scented soap at hand. Over a chair was a suit of clothes, complete even to the stockings, and shoes on the floor besides.

The tub was full of water, and Sammy guessed correctly what the water was for. In a few moments he emerged from the bath a very different looking boy indeed. He did not hesitate to put on the clothes which he saw over the chair, although he could not be sure that they were intended for him. To tell the truth, he was not very particular whether they belonged to him or not. Then, finding a brush and comb at hand, he stepped in front of the glass to give the finishing touches to his toilet. For a moment he did not know himself, and it was only after making three or four of the ugly faces with which he used to frighten the little girls that he was sure he was the same Sammy.

No sooner had he finished brushing his hair than a tap on the door let him know that the boy was still waiting

for him outside, and it was with quite a swagger that Sammy swung out of the room and followed his new acquaintance

Sammy's First Toilet.

down stairs. Then a door opened, and he looked on something lovelier than he had ever dreamed of in his life.

A long table stood lengthwise in the room, covered with beautiful china and silverware, and steaming dishes of all kinds of tempting food. All the seats but one were filled, some with boys and girls of about his own age, and dressed as nicely as himself, and others with ladies as beau-

tiful as she who had met him at the door. His little guide drew back his chair for him, and Sammy sat down, hardly knowing whether he was afoot or ahorseback.

But the smell of the good things to eat soon brought him to his senses, and he lost no time in helping himself. On one side of him sat a girl, with yellow curls, and the softest blue eyes, and on the other side sat a boy with a pleasant face. Both of them spoke to him, but Sammy was so greedy that he did not stop to make any answer until after his mouth was full, and then he could not. But while his mouth was full he looked about him, and had a chance to notice that neither his boy nor girl neighbors, nor anybody else at the table, seemed to take food to the mouth as he had done. No one said anything to him about it, but before Sammy began eating again he hunted about his plate for a fork such as he saw the others using, and, although he thought he could not get as much into his mouth at a time as he could with a knife, still he preferred to do as the rest did.

When, after a little while, the little girl spoke to him again he answered her, and did his best to leave the naughty words out of his talk, although it was very hard for Sammy to say ten words unless half of them were bad ones. It seemed to him that he never ate so much in his life before. He never had had enough before, even of bread and salt pork, and you may guess how much he ate to-day of this wonderful kind of food which almost melted in his mouth, hungry as he was besides.

Sammy did not know how tired he was until he had had enough to eat, and then, although he tried hard to be pleasant to the boy and girl who sat on either side, his eyes kept shutting in spite of himself, and he was very glad when some one at the other end of the table arose, and everybody else then stood up, and began to pass out of the room.

"I am so tired," said Sammy to the little girl. "I feel as if I could drop down."

"You want to go to bed, don't you?" she asked. "I will find where your room is."

In a few moments the boy in blue with the brass buttons was at his side, and said, "Do you wish to go to your room, sir?"

And such a room as it was that Sammy was ushered into! The bedstead was of brass, shining like pure gold. High pillows were at one end, and the coverlid was of silk and velvet. The bed clothing was pulled back so as to reveal the white sheets, where he should lie. Such a bed might tempt any one who was not sleepy, but poor, tired Sammy could hardly wait until he was alone.

"You will find your nightgown on the back of the bed," said the boy in blue. Sammy did not know what a nightgown was. He had always slept in his clothes, and the only reason he had not slept in his shoes was that he did not have any. But the new thing interested him, so, instead of climbing into the bed with everything on, as he had intended, he undressed like a civilized little boy, put on his nightgown, and crept in between the sheets. No sooner

had his head touched the pillow than the lights went out, and he was in the land of dreams.

A very surprised boy was Sammy when he opened his eyes the next morning, and found himself lying in a real bed, between real linen sheets, with a real silk coverlid over him, wearing a real nightgown, and his head resting on real pillows. He could not believe his eyes, and supposed that he must be still dreaming, and that what had happened the night before was part of the dream. As he looked about the room and saw the beautiful furniture and the bright carpet, he rubbed his eyes very hard so as to awake himself. When the things which he saw did not disappear after rubbing his eyes so hard, Sammy jumped out of bed, sure that when he shook himself they would fade out of sight, and he would find himself back in his own miserable room, still clad in his dirty and ragged clothes, his big brother lying in one corner, as dirty as himself. But nothing faded away. A little knock sounded on the door, and, in a moment, the boy in blue with brass buttons came inside.

"You will find the bath-room just behind," he said, "through that open door. Breakfast is almost ready."

Now Sammy could not understand why he needed another bath, as long as he had washed himself the night before. But, since everybody was treating him well for the first time in his life, he did not want to be the first to be disagreeable; so he made his way into the bath-room and took another dip in the tub. Then, coming back, he was about to dress himself in the clothes which he had worn

the night before, when, thrown over the foot of the bed, he noticed another suit, just as clean as the first, and almost as pretty, he thought, but more fitted for play. He lost no time in putting it on; and, after brushing his hair, so that he looked even nicer than last night, he stepped to the door and found his little friend in blue still waiting for him.

He was taken down to the same room where he had had that wonderful dinner the night before, and found the same company waiting for him again, with the same lovely little boy and girl on either side of him, and just as nice things to eat, although very different ones. This time Sammy did not even touch his fingers to the meat or potatoes, nor put his knife into his mouth once. He tried his best to eat just like the little gentleman and lady who sat on either side of him, and succeeded remarkably well for a beginner.

"We shall have a good chance to play after breakfast," said the boy on his left.

"Yes," said the girl; "we have such a lovely playground."

In a few moments more Sammy was passing along the long halls of the beautiful building, one hand held by his new girl friend, and the other by the boy, on their way to play.

Indeed it was a fine playground. There was a ball field, and a pond where boys were rowing or sailing little toy ships, or wading in above their knees. There were

great heaps of sand where smaller children were digging; and there were little goats hitched to wagons with regular harnesses, and little boys driving them. There were boards for boys to saw and cut, and nails for them to hammer, and there were little brooks where other boys were fishing, and fruit-trees, the boughs of which were heavy with apples, pears, peaches, and plums. Although the children were running hither and thither, and playing all the games which children love so well, no one was using a bad word, and no one being rough or rude to another.

Now, Sammy had really never played in his life. The only sort of sport he had enjoyed was making somebody else miserable, tormenting some little girl or boy, or abusing some dumb animal. So it was quite a while before he learned how to play with these children. Several times he forgot himself, and pushed or struck one of his new friends, and then he would stop and look about him, expecting to be seized by the collar and dragged off to be whipped. But the only punishment he received was the sorrowful look on the faces of those who noticed it, which somehow hurt him more than a whip would have done. Every one was kind to him, showed him all the new games, picked the nicest fruit for him, gave him the best boats to row, the nicest fish-poles to fish with, the nicest goat wagon to drive, and very soon Sammy had stopped even wanting to be naughty. It seemed the easiest thing in the world for him to be a gentle and good boy.

Sammy had always looked upon a school as the worst

place in the world, but the very second day after he came to this wonderful palace he was taken to the fairies' school, and found it fully as good fun to learn under their teaching as it was to play. And he seemed to learn so fast too; it

Sammy Trying To Learn How to Play.

was almost as if a hole was made in the top of his head, and knowledge poured into it.

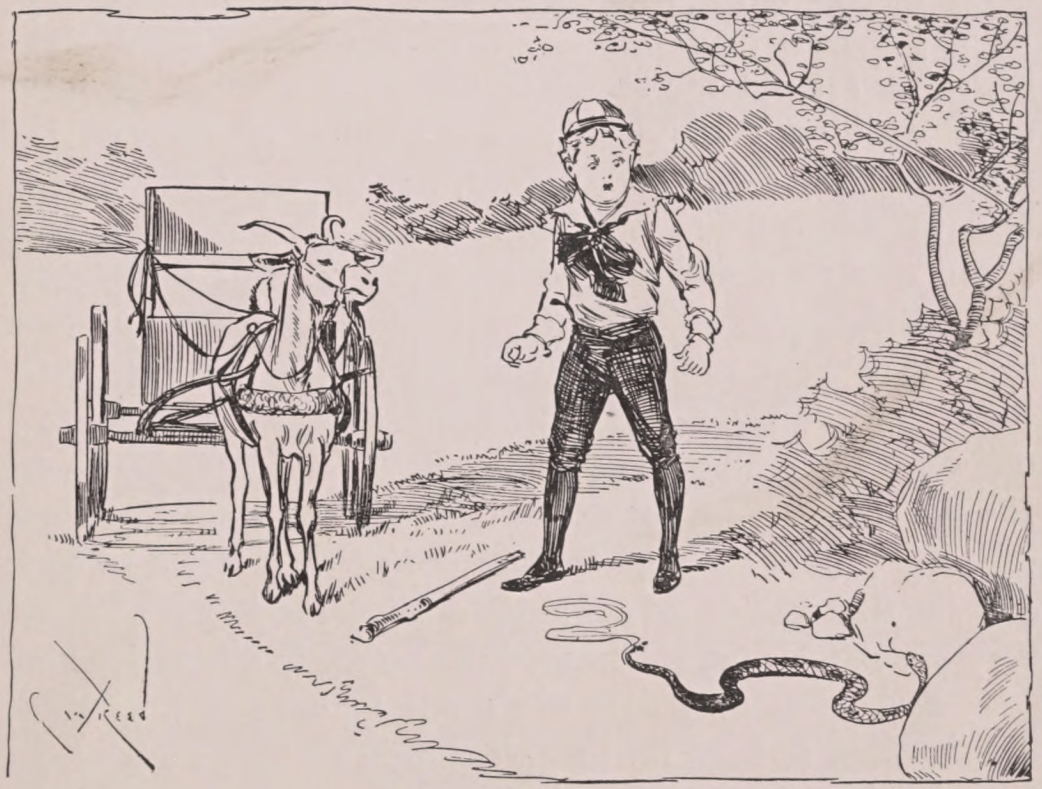
But, shocking to say, after Sammy had lived in this beautiful palace for a number of months, a naughty spirit came into him one day while at play with his friends, and

all of a sudden a stream of bad words poured out of his mouth. His new friends looked frightened almost to death, and it was only a moment before one of the fairies was by his side and shaking a little wand over his head. What she meant to do with the wand Sammy had no idea, but if she supposed it was going to stop him she was very much mistaken, for he only waited long enough to take breath before he began again. To his astonishment, every bad word, as it passed out of his mouth, turned into a fiery dart which burned his lips as it passed through them, and which, striking those to whom he was talking, pierced their skin and made them scream with pain. As soon as the boy discovered what his wicked words really were, he was so much frightened that he used them no more.

But it was no later than the next day before Sammy had another attack of naughtiness. He began by disobeying the commands of one of the fairies, and made a bad matter worse by telling a lie about it. When she shook her wand over him, he saw his lie change into a long, wriggling snake, with wicked bead-like eyes and a fork-like tongue. As long as lies were such terrible things as that, Sammy resolved never to tell a falsehood again.

One day he lost his temper with a little goat that was hitched to a wagon, and, breaking a piece of bough from one of the bushes, he began to beat the poor little beast with it very cruelly. What was Sammy's surprise when, instead of the plaintive cry which he had expected, the animal turned his head toward him and began to talk

with him just like a human being. "Don't you know," he said to Sammy, who dropped his stick and opened his mouth in astonishment to hear a goat talk, "that it hurts me to be pounded with a stick just as much as it would hurt you? If I don't do what you want to have me do, it is because I don't understand what you want, or because



Sammy Very Much Surprised.

I am not strong enough to do it. It is very unkind of you to beat an animal!" Great tears ran down the goat's hairy cheeks, and he sobbed like a child. It was not

necessary for any more of the animals about the fairy palace to talk with Sammy in order to teach him that animals had feelings just like his own.

Another day the boy had a lazy fit, and when the school-bell rang, and the other children left the playground for their lessons, he crawled in behind a bush and made up his mind to have a nap instead of doing anything like work that morning. But, all of a sudden, there came marching around the corner of the bush a crowd of little men, each with a hammer and handful of nails in his hands. They said never a word, but, scattering all about him, went to work to nail him to the ground, fastening him by his clothes, through the corners and folds of which they drove little spikes with all their might and main. At first Sammy thought it was a great joke to see the little men work so hard, while such a big fellow as he was lying out in the warm sunlight, doing nothing at all but enjoying himself. It was not very long, however, before he found out that they were working to some purpose, since when he tried to turn over, he found he could not move at all. He began to grow very uncomfortable, and begged them very loudly to let him go. But either they were too small to have ears, or they did not want to hear, for they went right on with their work, fastening him down tighter to the earth every minute, until, when their captain had fully inspected the job, and was satisfied that Sammy could not get up, they went off around the bush, and he saw them no more.

So Sammy lay there in the sun, which grew hotter every

minute, and, although he shouted at the top of his voice for help, no one came to him. How he wished all that long forenoon that he had gone to school like a good boy!

Sammy Is Tied Down by the Little Men.

He remembered how cool and fresh the air was where the other boys and girls were studying their lessons. He could not understand what had made him so wicked that morning that he should have played truant, and preferred to idle through the forenoon rather than to study. The tears running down his cheeks washed away the earth which

held two or three of the nails in place, so that Sammy was able to move his head a little from side to side, which was some relief; but no time ever seemed so long as that forenoon, and no voice ever before sounded so pleasant as that of his fairy school-teacher, when, accompanied by a band of children, she came out into the grounds again.

His friends lost no time in pulling up the nails which fastened him so securely, and in wiping the tears and dust from his little sunburned face. But nobody scolded him or asked him any hard questions. All knew Sammy had learned another lesson which he would never forget.

As it drew toward the end of the year that Sammy Hawkins had passed in fairyland, he had grown to be one of the nicest boys in the whole place. No one would have supposed that he had ever been cruel or disobedient, had ever used bad words, or told lies, or loved to be unkind. The fairies were very proud of their work of curing a bad boy, and were looking for some way to get him back into the world again, where he could do some good.

Now, it so happened that not far from the fairy palace lived a man and his wife who had lost a boy that would have been just Sammy's age if he had lived. They could not be comforted, as he was a sweet and noble boy, and had been a great joy to them. So one of the fairies, taking pity on the unhappy pair, went to their bedside one night, and made the father dream. And the dream was that a boy came down the street in front of his house, and stopped at his gate, then came up to his front door and knocked

upon it; and that he came to the door, his wife looking over his shoulder, and the little boy, whom they thought was very much like their own son that had died, told them that he was very tired and hungry, and asked them if they would let him rest a little; that after he had rested, and they had given him something to eat, they asked him about his father and mother and his home; and that he told them that he had none, and that they looked at each other, and, both thinking the same thing, they asked him if he would not like to live with them and be their son.

And just then the man awoke, and, awaking his wife, told her his dream. They lay there talking about it, and crying over the boy they had lost, almost until morning.

And that very morning the queen of the fairies came to Sammy as soon as he was dressed, and said that it was time for him to go out into the world again; he had come to them a bad boy, and they had made him a good boy; he had come ignorant, and he had become intelligent. She told him that there was a man in a town not far away who wanted just such a boy as he for his son. He could make the heart of that man and of his wife glad, and have every help to grow up to be a good man himself, and that he must go there.

"Oh! where must I go?" asked the boy, whimpering at the thought of leaving this beautiful fairyland. So she told him that he must walk along such and such a street, until he came to a house with a brown front, and iron steps running up to it, with the number "64" on the door; that

he must go up to the door and ring the bell, and when the man came to the door tell him that he was tired and hungry.

Sammy began to cry, but the fairy kissed him on his forehead and then disappeared, and the room in which Sammy was standing disappeared, and the palace in which the room was disappeared, and the grounds in which the

Sammy Finds a Good Home.

palace stood disappeared. Sammy found himself once more in the same field where he had been chasing the beautiful little white dog a year ago. He was as tired and hungry now

as he was then, although he was no longer dirty, and really did not look at all like the same boy.

He walked along the road which was close at hand, until it brought him to a town, and, walking down the street as he had been told, he came to a house with a brown front and iron steps, with the figures "64" on the door. His little heart in his throat with excitement, he went up the steps and knocked. The door was opened by the kindest-faced gentleman he had ever seen, and right behind him, peering over his shoulder, was his wife, as kind and sweet as himself; and both of them looked so surprised and so happy that Sammy could not understand it at all, nor did he know what they meant when they both cried at once, "It is the very boy!"

But they did not wait for Sammy to say he was hungry or tired, but, taking him into the dining-room, set the best in the house before him; and no sooner had he eaten than they both asked him, almost at once, how he would like to live with them always and be their little son.

# STORY OF THE GOLDEN KEY.

TOMMY JONES had brothers and sisters in plenty, but very little of anything else. His father did the best he could to feed and clothe a large family, and his mother did all that any woman could; but many a night the children had to go supperless to bed, and the beds were none too warm. Tommy was only ten years old and could not do much to help, but he always did his best, and he tried hard not to cry when he was hungry.

One afternoon he went into the woods near the little house where he lived; he was in search of chestnuts, which he knew would serve him and his brothers and sisters for supper. He had just filled his pockets when he heard a pitiful mewing. Being a kind-hearted little boy, he looked everywhere for the cat which he supposed must be in trouble. At last he saw her in the branches of a tall tree, where her foot seemed to be caught. He called to her, and she answered with more mewing and a struggle to free her foot, as if asking him to come to her help.

Now Tommy was a pretty good climber, but this was a very high tree with no branches near the ground. He

Pussy Asks for Help.

threw off his coat, however, and began to climb. It was easier than he had thought, and he was half way up to the cat before he looked down at the ground, which seemed so far away that it made him dizzy. But when he stopped climbing, the cat mewed so much louder that he looked down no more, but kept climbing up as fast as possible. He found poor pussy's foot was bleeding, and it was hard work to loosen it from the crotch in the branches where it had been caught; but at last she was free, and jumping on his

shoulder began purring and rubbing herself against his face, as he made his way down the tree, not daring to look at the ground for fear it would make him dizzy again.

No sooner had he reached the ground and drawn a full breath than pussy sprang off his shoulder, and he never heard nor saw her again. But just at the foot of the tree he saw a little ribbon, such as pets sometimes wear about their necks, and fastened to it was a little yellow key. Taking it up, he found the key was quite heavy, and appeared to be of gold. He began to call the cat, thinking that, being somebody's pet, it would be wrong for him to keep the key which had been on her neck; but almost at once he found tied to the ribbon a note. It said, "This is a present for the boy who was so kind to a cat."

Tommy had had no dinner that day, and it quickly occurred to him that if the key was really of gold it would not take him long to turn it into bread and meat. So a moment later he was running into the village as fast as his legs would carry him, all the while thinking how happy his father and mother and his brothers and sisters would be when he brought back to them plenty to eat and drink for once.

He was only a little way from the store where he meant to take his key, when an old woman, who had been walking very slowly, turned around and spoke to him. Tommy had always been taught to be respectful to persons older than himself, and, in spite of his hurry, he stopped to ask what she might want. She answered in a very feeble voice,

saying that she would like to lean on his shoulder. Some of Tommy's little friends happened to be near by, and he felt ashamed to be seen walking along the street with a ragged old woman leaning on his shoulder, but he had a

Tommy Told Where to Seek His Fortune.

kind heart, and did not refuse. He was also in a great hurry to exchange his golden key for bread and meat, but he patiently trudged along beside the old woman, although she leaned very heavily on his shoulder.

When they reached a very large and tall oak-tree that stood quite near the village store, the old woman stopped, but still kept her hand on Tommy's shoulder. She asked him what it was he had in his hand, and where he found it; and Tommy, who had always been honest, told the whole story, and also what he was planning to do with the key.

The old woman said, "You're a very good little boy to take pity on a cat, and you showed yourself better in helping an old woman like me, when you were in such a hurry. Now, I will tell you what to do with your golden key. Don't take it to the store, but keep it safely until to-night. Be at this tree where we now stand when the clock strikes twelve, and you will have a chance to make your fortune." The words had no sooner gone out of her mouth than her heavy hand was taken from Tommy's shoulder, and, when he turned quickly around to begin to ask questions, she was nowhere to be seen.

Tommy did not go into the store with his key, as he had intended to do, but turned around and walked slowly home, although he could not help thinking of how pleasant it would have been to take with him all those good things which he had been planning to buy.

All they had to eat in Tommy's house that night was a crust of dry bread and plenty of water, with some of the raw chestnuts which he took out of his pocket. It was not much like the supper which he had expected to bring home.

Now the boy kept no secrets from his mother, and had

no idea of stealing out of the house and down to the big oak-tree unless she gave him leave. But he did not have any chance to speak to her alone that evening, for the whole family were in the habit of going to bed very early, so that they could forget how hungry they were. All went quickly to sleep except Tommy, and he was thinking so hard of the wonderful things which had happened to him that afternoon that he did not feel like closing his eyes. After he was sure everybody else was asleep, he rose from the little pile of straw in one corner, which was the only bed he knew, and crept softly over to where his mother was sleeping. He had no sooner put his hand upon her than she awoke, and asked him what was the matter.

Then Tommy told her in a whisper all about the cat, and about the old woman who had promised him a fortune. At first his mother thought the boy was dreaming, and told him to go to sleep again; but when he showed her the little golden key with the silk ribbon, she saw that could not be a part of a dream. She asked her little son if he would not be afraid to go down to the tree so late at night, and he answered, not if she was willing he should go. She then told him to lie down and sleep, and she would call him when it was time to start.

It did not seem to Tommy as if he had been sleeping longer than a minute when his mother awakened him with a kiss, and told him it was time to go. She asked him again if he was not afraid, and offered to go with him, but

Time to Get Up.

Tommy said the fairy had not told him to bring any one, and perhaps would not like it if he should; so he kissed his mother good-by, and trudged out into the dark, all alone, although, to tell the truth, his heart was beating very fast. He walked a few steps, and then he ran, until he had come near the big oak-tree. Then he saw, lying on the ground, a man with a pale face, looking very sick indeed, who drew a cup from his pocket and asked the boy to take it to the brook near by, and fill it with water, which he said

he thought would make him feel better. Now Tommy feared that he was late already, and that if he did as the sick man asked it would be past twelve o'clock before he could get to the tree, and so he would lose all chance of the promised fortune. But for all that he took the cup quickly and ran back again toward the brook. In the light of the moon Tommy saw that the vessel which he held was of pure gold, and being much larger than the key he was quite sure it would buy bread and meat enough to last for a long time. A wicked spirit told him to run away with the cup instead of filling it with water for the sick man, but Tommy would do no such thing.

When he came back with the cup full of water the man drank it hastily, and then rose to his feet, saying he felt very much better, and walked along with the boy. Just as they reached the big oak-tree, while Tommy was looking all about for some sign of the fortune which he had been promised, the man said to him: —

"I know that you were in a hurry when you found me lying in the path, but you went back after the water without any complaint. I know, too, that the gold cup must have tempted you; but I see that you are a good boy, and deserving of a fortune, and this is the way that leads to it." And as he spoke he laid his hand upon the tree, and, to Tommy's surprise, where he had noticed only ordinary bark before, he now saw a door large enough for him to enter, locked with a padlock. The man then said to him: —

"The little golden key will unlock this padlock; then

you can open the door. Go in and fear nothing. It is only the bad who need be afraid."

The boy drew out his little golden key, and, fitting it in the lock, found that it turned and the door opened. As

The Key Unlocks the Oak Tree.

Tommy turned around to ask an eager question the man was nowhere in sight. And just then the bell in the village church began to toll for twelve o'clock.

It looked very gloomy, but Tommy thought he would

just step inside, and then if he did not like it he could come out again; no sooner, however, was he inside the door than it closed behind him with a ringing noise, and, although he felt all about in the darkness, he could not find any handle. From the outside the tree had not looked so very large, and the boy was very much surprised to see in front of him quite a long hallway with a light at the other end. Not being able to go back he had to go forward, although to tell the truth he felt very timid. When he came to the end of the hallway he found himself in a small room. At one side of the room was a large iron safe, and in front of the safe door stood a little man, with a high pointed cap of red, whose feet seemed to grow right out of the bottom of his body. The little man looked very cross, and Tommy was more afraid than ever, but as he could not go back, and saw no door anywhere, except the door in the safe, there was nothing to do but to speak to the goblin. Tommy thought the fortune he had been promised must be in that safe.

"Will you please open that safe for me?" he said to the little man.

Just then loud voices were heard, which seemed to come from inside the safe, and the growling of fierce dogs; and the dwarf said to Tommy, "Are you not afraid?"

"Yes, I am," answered the boy, "but I want to go in just the same." At that the cross face changed to a pleasant one, and without more ado the dwarf touched the handle of the safe door, and it flew open. As Tommy leaned down

to look in, he saw no dogs, such as he had supposed must be inside, nor giants, nor other terrible people to hurt him, but neither did he see any bags of gold nor the precious jewels he had expected. Indeed, there were no drawers nor shelves in the safe at all; it seemed to be just the opening to a passage, and not a very pleasant-looking passage either; not quite as high as his head to start with, and it seemed to grow smaller farther along. But he had a stout little heart, and determined to try if a fortune was really waiting for him. So he stepped inside the safe door, and, bending his head, began to grope his way along the narrow passageway.

Almost at once he found that he must go down upon his knees in order to make any headway at all, and he had hardly done that before he heard the safe door clang behind him. For a moment he felt sick at heart, and wished he had never started out to seek the fortune which was so very hard to find. Still he kept groping along on his hands and knees, while the passage kept growing narrower and lower, until he had to crawl on his stomach. It was then that he saw ahead of him a light, and began to hope that he might soon get out of this terrible place. But the opening still grew smaller and smaller, until he was just getting ready to give up trying to go any farther, and making up his mind to go back and beseech the dwarf to let him out, when he found himself at the end of his difficult journey, and standing in a large and well-lighted room.

The room was filled with a gay company of boys and

girls in silks and velvets, singing and dancing as if there was nothing to do in this world but to have a good time. Tommy at first felt very much out of place among such a company ; his own clothes were so poor, and his feet bare. He was much pleased when they gathered about him, as if very glad to see him, not seeming to notice his rags. They all began asking him questions at once : Where Tommy had come from, where he was going, how old he was, and last, and best of all, as he thought, if he was hungry.

Tommy answered the last question first with a very loud " Yes ; " and it was not a minute before he found himself seated at a table covered with the whitest of cloth, and before him dishes filled with things to eat. The poor boy had never had much besides bread and potatoes to eat in his life, and little enough of those, — even butter was a curiosity in his house ; and had never smelled anything so nice before as the strange-looking kinds of food which were set before him. But he did not wait to ask any questions, and helping himself from the nearest dish began to eat as only a hungry boy can.

When he rose from the table his new friends proposed a game of " tag," and Tommy joined in great delight. When they were tired of tag, " hunt the slipper " was proposed, and the frolic was just at its height when Tommy remembered that he had come looking for his fortune, and not for so much fun. So he suddenly stopped in the midst of the game and said he could not wait any longer. The little boys and girls gathered thickly about him and begged

Tommy Remembers His Important Business.

him to play just a little longer, but Tommy said that he must go and seek his fortune. And just at that moment he saw a door in the opposite side of the room, toward which he began to make his way.

His little friends, who had been so pleasant, now became very cross and angry, calling him disagreeable names, mocking his rags, pointing at his bare feet, and altogether making Tommy feel very badly. But at last he broke away from all of them, and opening the door passed out.

Then as he looked about him he was glad that he had not wasted any more time in play, for, sure enough, right before his eyes was all the fortune which any boy could ask, — silver in all shapes, money, beautiful vases, and ornaments, — enough of them he was sure to buy a whole village. All this treasure of silver was in plain view, but still at some little distance off.

Tommy saw, as he looked about him, a number of other little boys looking longingly at the treasure. Some were ragged and bare-legged, and others wore pretty clothes and looked as if they had never been hungry in their lives. For a minute he wondered why they did not all run right over to where the silver was, and help themselves, there seemed so much of it in sight. But, as he took a few steps that way, he saw that, although the treasure was not far off, it was not easy to get to. Between where he stood and the store of silver there seemed to be a million sharp thorns sticking up, to wound the feet of any one who tried to pass over. And many of the thorns were red, as if from the wounds of those who had fallen on them. As he looked more closely, however, he could see, planted among the thorns, very small stepping-stones, no one of them large enough to hold the whole of even a very small boy's foot, and not too near together at that.

While he stood looking, one of the little boys near him made a start for the treasure, but, after stepping on two or three of the stones, came back faster than he went, crying out that the stones were hot. Three or four other boys,

who had been all ready to follow him, drew back when he returned, and gathered around him, listening to his complaints, and afraid to try the passage themselves. But Tommy could see on the other side several boys helping themselves to the silver treasure, and he was sure that there was no other way for them to get there except over the thorns and the stepping-stones, and that if they had crossed he ought to be brave enough to try. He thought of his poor father and mother, his brothers and sisters, who were so hungry at home, and made up his mind that he would try the passage himself.

When he went down to the edge the boys came up to watch him. Some of them told him that he would tear his hands on the thorns, and others that he would burn his feet on the hot stones. But a few said that the thorns were not so very sharp, nor the stones so very hot. Tommy made up his mind not to pay any attention to what any of them said, but set his teeth, and stepped out on the first stone, which he found fully as hot as any one had reported. As he stepped over to the second he found it was no cooler, and he thought surely the bottoms of his feet were blistering. The boys whom he had just left watched him with great interest, and kept shouting all kinds of messages to him, but he would have thought more of messages from the other side, if any had been given; but it seemed as if the boys who had once gotten over lost all interest in their old companions.

When Tommy was half way across, his foot slipped on

one of the smaller stones, and he fell flat on the thorns, tearing a new great rent in his clothes and making the blood flow from his knees. He could only raise himself to his feet after painful wounds in his hands and wrists, and once

Across the Thorny Path.

more he wished that he had never left his own home to go seeking for a fortune. The shouts of the boys whom he had left behind, saying, "I told you so," did not comfort him at all, and, as he struggled to his feet again, and tried

his best to get along, he noticed the boys who were on the other side now watching him, but not at all invitingly.

But the last half of the way was much easier than the first. The stones grew gradually cooler, and the thorns were more far apart, until at last he reached the side where the treasure was. He turned to look back, and saw that two other little boys had started to follow him. One of them, after getting almost half way, had turned about to go back, and the other, even further along, had stopped and seemed just ready to give it up. Tommy remembered how he had wanted encouragement, and called back that it would be easier the rest of the way, and the little fellow took new heart, and came all the way over. Then he and Tommy went up to the stores of silver, which they had so well earned, and it took them but a few minutes to fill their pockets until so heavy the boys could hardly walk.

While they were loading themselves with the treasure they saw boys who had come over before themselves, one after another passing out of doors to the right and left; but just as they were ready to go after them they saw one little fellow walk up to a door which they had not noticed before, leading straight ahead. Now Tommy felt in a great hurry to get home to his mother with all the treasure which he had found. He had been picturing to himself, as he filled his pockets, how, after this, his brothers and sisters and himself would always have just such delicious dinners as he had eaten a few minutes before. But before he went he made up his mind that he would at least find out what

was beyond that other door ; so, his little friend by his side, he opened it and looked in.

The treasures of silver were nothing to be compared with the treasures of gold which he saw before him now, and much as he had wanted the silver, he wanted the gold more. He remembered how hard it had been to reach the silver, and was ready to believe that it must be even harder to get to the gold. But he was a brave boy, and as long as he was seeking his fortune he wanted to get as good a fortune as he could. The first thing to do was to find how to get to the gold, for between the place where he and his little friend were standing and the heaps of treasures was a wide opening, out of which black smoke and red fire kept curling, and it was easy to see that no one could ever go through that.

The place was not any too light, and it was some time before the boys found the only way provided to get over. That was a narrow plank, not wide enough to stand upon with both feet together. The plank had no railing, and was not so far above the smoke and fire that one could feel by any means safe in passing over. His friend said he would not try it, and, although Tommy persuaded him two or three times to come to the very edge of the plank, when the little fellow smelled the smoke he grew very pale and insisted that he would rather go back with what he had, and begged Tommy to go with him ; but our hero would not hear of such a thing. He would have liked a balancing-rod to carry across the plank, as he had seen performers do

A Very Narrow Bridge to Walk.

on tight ropes or wires, but, no such thing being at hand, he carefully divided the silver which he had, putting half of it in the pockets on one side and half in the pockets on the other, hoping that it would keep him steady.

He then bade his little friend good-by, and started across the plank, which was even narrower than it had looked ; but he tried to keep his eyes straight ahead, and not to think of his danger any more than he could help. He had al-

most reached the other side when he suddenly looked down, and was so frightened at what he saw that he lost his balance and fell. But as he threw out his hands he managed to catch the plank. His feet now hung directly in the opening, and he thought he was being burned up by the fire, while the smoke filled his eyes and nose, until he could hardly see or breathe.

But Tommy's was too brave a spirit to let him give up until he had to, so he kept trying to pull himself along the plank by his hands, and a little cheer in the distance told him that his friend was still watching him. His strength grew less and less, his hands slipped more and more off the plank, until at last he let go. He could not see where he was, but he supposed that when he let go it would be the last of him. He shut his eyes as he fell, but it was only for a little way. He had really passed almost over the opening before he lost his hold, and quite free of the fire, so he had only to clamber up the brink, and he was safe. He waved his hand to his friend on the other side, but did not dare to invite him over after his own danger; so he silently watched the little fellow turn around and go back through the door, with whatever treasures of silver he had.

The stores of gold which Tommy saw ready for his hand were more wonderful than he had imagined. It did not take him long to empty his pockets of silver and fill them with the more precious metal. He knew that he had enough now so that his father might have a better home, and his little brothers and sisters be clothed and comfortable,

and that they might all have as much to eat as they wanted all their lives. He was very happy that he had not been satisfied with the silver. Looking about, he saw a few boys, who, like himself, had passed over the narrow plank, some of whom were resting after their efforts, while others were passing out to the right and left. Several of them gathered around him, and told him how they came over the thorns and stepping-stones, to the silver treasure, and afterwards made the difficult passage of the narrow plank, to the stores of gold. Some said they had come over the plank without losing their balance once; others had fallen, and been saved by some companion; others had come in pairs, and helped each other; still others had tried two or three times, and had gone back afraid, before they made the final passage. They also told him of other boys whom they had seen try to make the passage, but who had fallen in the middle, not to be seen again.

Then one of them said to Tommy, "Are you going to try for the jewels, or are you satisfied?"

Tommy said, "I ought to be satisfied; but where are the jewels?"

And the boy said, "Just beyond are the jewels. Fill your pockets with this gold — it may last a few years; but fill them with the jewels beyond, and you will be rich all your life."

Tommy thought he might as well look at the jewels; so, instead of passing out at the side doors as most of the boys were doing, he opened the door straight ahead. Piles of

glistening diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires were in sight, such as he had never dreamed of before. But between him and the precious store of jewels ran an angry river, boiling high, full of rocks, and looking very dangerous, and he remembered that he had never learned to swim,

Tommy Hesitates Between Business and Pleasure.

and thought that even if he had, he would not like to venture into such a stream as that. Besides, poor little Tommy felt very tired. He had been through great trials since he had left home, so long ago it seemed, and it was

very hard for him to think of attempting any new dangers, worse than those that had gone before, after all he had been through. The more he thought of it, the more it seemed to him that he would do better to be satisfied with the gold which he had.

As he cast his eyes about him, he saw to the right of him a door. Perhaps it led to some easier way to the jewels than plunging into the black river. He found it opened into a beautiful room. Bright pictures hung on the walls; on the floor was a thick carpet like down, the room was lighted from hanging lamps, and easy chairs were placed about it, which looked very tempting to him. He noticed hanging on a rack in a corner a suit of clothes, which he was sure would fit him. There was a beautiful blue cap with a lovely ostrich feather, a velvet suit, high stockings of silk, and a pair of shoes that were just his size. It did not take Tommy very long to throw off the soiled and ragged clothes he wore, and put on the new clothes.

Now, forgetting all about the jewels, he passed out into another room larger than the first, in the centre of which was set a table, on which a dinner, smoking hot, was waiting for him. Like most boys, Tommy always had an appetite, but he had passed through enough this night to make him even more hungry than usual, and the meal which he found waiting for him was even better than the one he had enjoyed so much with the children.

While he was eating, he began to hear lovely music which made him very sleepy. He was sure that there

must be a bed near by, and in the next room he found such a bed as he had never seen before, — so soft that, when he put his weight on it, it sank far down, — the linen as white as snow, and the most tempting pillows for him to lay his head upon. The sheets were drawn back, too, as if to make it easier for him to creep in. Tommy's eyes were heavy with sleep, and he felt that he had done all the work that could be asked of any little boy, and had a right to rest.

But it happened that, never having seen a real bed before, his own sleeping-place having been a heap of straw in a corner of the room, he thought he would look this all over before getting into it. He handled the silk quilt, felt of the fine linen sheets, pressed the soft feather pillows, and at last went down on his hands and knees to look underneath. All his happiness suddenly disappeared. A keg of powder had been placed directly under the spot where he would have lain, and, running from the powder, was a long fuse, the end of which was burning. Tommy saw that the fuse would soon burn to the powder, and the powder explode; and that if he had ever crept into the bed and gone to sleep there would have been a speedy end of his fortune.

Then it came over him that he had not left his little home to sleep, nor to enjoy music, nor to eat rich dinners, but in search of his fortune; and he started out of the beautiful room far more eagerly than he had come into it. But it had been much easier to come in than it was to go out. His feet seemed glued to the floor, and his legs almost refused to move. As he passed through doors it seemed

Tommy Crossing the River.

as if hands which he could not see caught hold of him, and tried to draw him back. When he finally had passed out, and once more saw the black river, and the jewels in clear sight, Tommy felt almost as tired as he had done after any of his labors of that night. He stopped no longer, however, but pushed forward to the edge of the river, although the nearer he came to it the blacker and more fearful it looked.

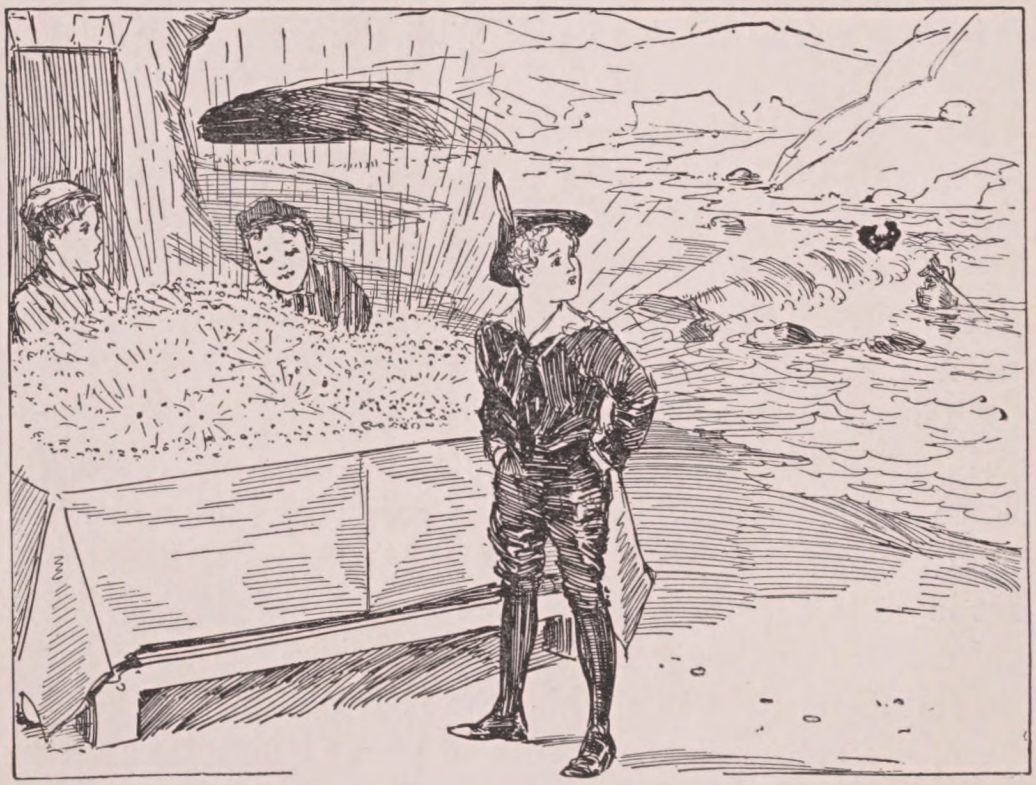
While he stood there he saw other boys rush into the

river and try to swim across; and they were either taken under by the black waters, and were seen no more, or else were driven back. But as he walked along the shore and looked more carefully he saw a number of boats, and of all kinds. Some were large and pleasant, and looked safe enough for anybody. Others were very slight, and looked as if they would break to pieces by the mere force of the waves. Going to one of the larger boats, he found it would cost a great deal of money to ride in it; and when he took out all that he had of gold in his pockets, and showed to the boatman, the fellow shook his head. So Tommy finally had to take up with one of the smaller boats, and its greedy owner demanded every particle of the boy's gold for fare.

Then the boat started upon its passage. If the water had looked black and dangerous from the shore, it was far worse in the passage. The waves rose very high and often fell over into the boat, so that the water must be dipped out in little cups, to prevent the craft from sinking. Big and rough rocks stuck their noses out from the water every few feet; and once in a while the boat would strike one of them, and seem likely to break to pieces before it could be pushed off. Other boats came quite near them, as they made the passage, and often one of them would tip over and send to the bottom everybody on board. Sometimes his boatman would row fast and seem to make good headway; at other times the waves were so strong and high that the boat went backward instead of forward. Tommy was now

only anxious to save his life. He would perhaps have turned about and gone back, but the boatman told him that would be the most dangerous thing of all to do.

At last they came almost to the shore, and the waters began to be more quiet, and the boatman rowed more



Tommy Finds His Fortune.

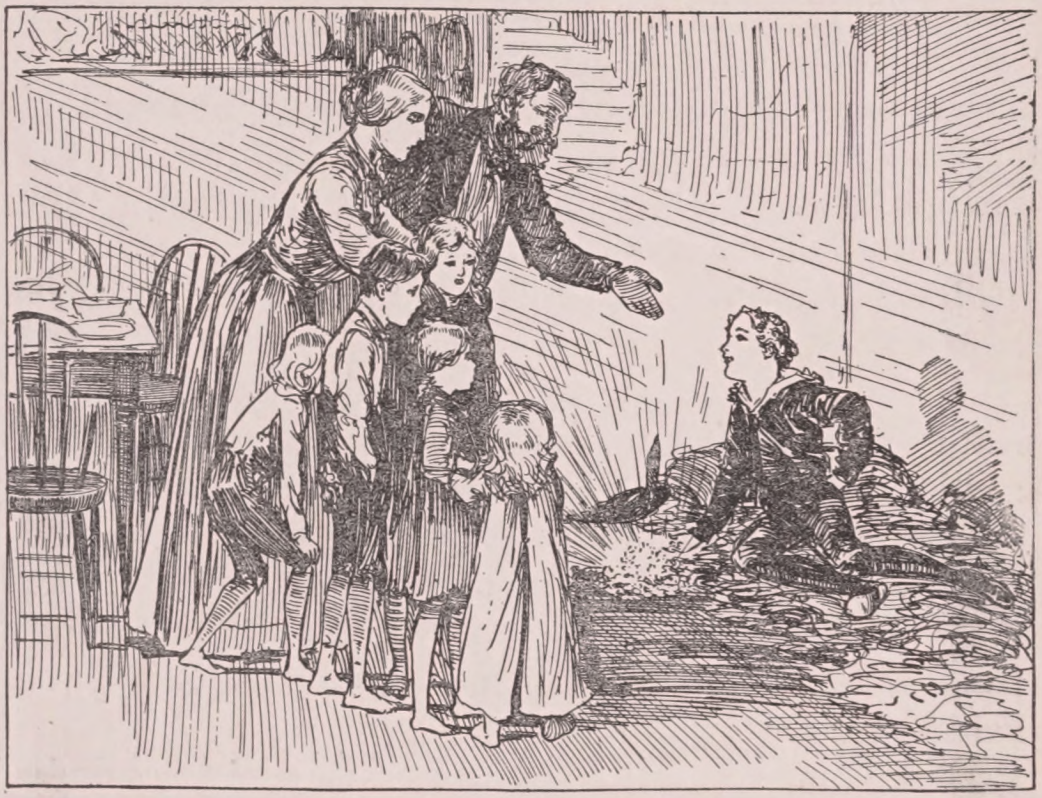
easily, when suddenly another boat came tearing down toward them, driven by the waves, and striking theirs on the side, threw Tommy out into the water. He went down, down, down, until he thought he would never come up

again; but, holding his breath, like the wise boy that he was, he struck out with his arms when he came to the top, and, although he had never learned to swim, he found that he did not sink again, and a few more bold, hard strokes brought him to where his feet touched bottom, and he climbed up on the shore.

Tommy was the most tired boy in the world then, and he lay down just out of the reach of the waves for a few minutes, forgetting there was such a thing as a jewel within reach. But by and by his strength came back to him, and he looked about. There were only two little fellows on that side. Few who attempted to cross that stream were able to do so. He felt so sad then, as he saw the other boys come to grief while trying to make that terrible passage, that the emeralds, diamonds, rubies, and sapphires hardly seemed worth the taking.

But Tommy wearily filled his pockets with the wonderful glittering things, and, the new clothes having numerous pockets, he was able to store about him enough to buy a whole county if he should want one. Then, without even looking back again at the terrible black river, he started for the nearest door in sight, so weak that he could hardly open it.

He tried three times before he opened the door, and outside everything looked so black that at first he could see nothing. But when he shut the door behind him he found himself not, as he had expected, far away from home, but just outside of the oak tree where the sick man had



A Happy Morning in Tommy's Home.

left him, and the bell, which was just beginning to strike twelve when he went into the tree, was just finishing its strokes as he came out. Feeling behind him on the tree, Tommy found nothing but the rough bark, — nothing like a door anywhere. He thought surely he must have been dreaming, until, putting his hands in his pockets, he felt the gems.

It took him but a few moments to reach his home, the door of which was always open, as there was not anything

worth stealing in that house; and, without even awaking his mother, he threw himself on his own little pile of straw in the corner, and went to sleep.

Tommy knew nothing more until the bright light of day was streaming into the room, when, hearing voices about him, he opened his eyes and saw his father and mother, his two brothers and his three sisters, all gathered around and staring at him.

"What is the matter?" he cried, forgetting for the moment all that had happened to him during the last night.

"What is the matter?" echoed his father. "Where did you get those clothes that you have on?"

The boy glanced down at his velvet coat and silk stockings and his beautiful shoes, and at his cap with the feather in it that lay beside him, and then he remembered.

"I will tell you," he said, "but first let mother tell what she knows about it."

After his mother had told her story, Tommy told his, and, when he had finished, he emptied his pockets of all the rare and costly jewels which they contained.

So that family was never poor any more, but had all the best of the good things which there are in the world; and all because Tommy was a good and brave and true little boy.

# STORY OF THE MAGIC MIRROR.

MR. THOMPSON was a very rich man. He had horses and carriages, a town and a country house, servants by the dozen, and he owned whole acres of beautiful groves and green meadows.

Everything had gone well with Mr. Thompson, except that, for many years, he had had no child. Many and many a time he and his wife had said they would gladly exchange all their wealth for one little tiny baby. And at last on a Christmas eve a wee little girl was given to them. Mr. Thompson was sitting in his library when the good news was brought, and felt the happiest man in the whole world. He pictured to himself the wonderful things he would do for that little girl, the pleasures he would give her, the trips all over the world, the love and care such as no other child ever had. Already he pictured her climbing into his lap, patting his cheeks, saying what a kind good papa he was, and asking him for everything which money could buy. He thought that if she cried for the moon he would do his best to get it for her. But just then there came a tap at his door, and in response to his "Come in" a maid entered.

"An old woman wants to see you," she said, "and we cannot put her off."

"What is her name?" he asked.

"She would not give any name. She said it was something about the baby, sir."

"Something about the baby? What kind of a looking woman is she?"

"Oh, she is not a nice-looking woman at all, sir," answered the maid. "Her clothes are very old and faded, and she wears the funniest bonnet, sir, you ever saw."

"What can she have to say to me about my baby?" exclaimed Mr. Thompson. "Oh, send her away."

Then the father began to dream once more about the wonderful new baby that was given to him, and how happy he would make her, and keep away from her all the sorrow and trouble in the world, when there came another tap at his door, and the maid entered again.

"She won't go away, sir. She says you will be very sorry if you don't see her."

Now, on any other night but this Mr. Thompson would not have thought for a moment of letting the beggar woman — for such he thought it was — come into his library, but he hated to refuse any request to-night, so he said, "Well, let her come," and as the girl shut the door behind her he felt in his pocket for loose change, supposing that the woman was coming after money. Then the door opened again and a funny little old woman came in, with a queer old-fashioned bonnet on her head, heavy

shoes on her feet that sounded very loudly when she walked, and a faded shawl pinned about her shoulders. The maid waited curiously at the door until her master said, "You may go, Mary," then, turning to the old woman, he invited her to sit down. Mr. Thompson was a gentleman, and however poor a woman might be he always tried to be polite to her. "Now, what is it you want?"

"I just want to make you a present, Mr. Thompson."

And then he was surprised, and smiled. "You are sure you don't want to have me make you one?"

"Oh, no!" and she laughed the strange cackling laugh of the very old woman; "but the present is not so much for you as for the little one."

"A present for my baby so soon!" he exclaimed.

"It isn't much to look at," said the old woman, "and you may laugh when you see it." And, fumbling in her pocket, she drew forth a broken piece of looking-glass, which she laid on the desk. "This is the present."

Mr. Thompson thought she must be out of her wits, but he could not be harsh to any one that night, so he thought to joke with her a little. "Why, the baby would cut herself with that! Besides, we have plenty of mirrors in the house, which we could break up to make such little bits as this if we wanted to give her a chance to cut her fingers."

The old woman cackled again. "But you have no mirror like this," she said. "This is a magic looking-glass, made many, many years ago, before all the great

The Gift of the Magic Mirror.

secrets had been forgotten, and it is now the only piece of the kind in the whole world."

"Why, it looks like any other looking-glass," said Mr. Thompson, "except that it is more stained."

"This is no joke, sir," she answered, "nor am I the half-witted creature that you think. Your little girl you mean to surround with all of the best there is in this world. All that money can buy you will give her, and all that care can do for her will be done. But great dangers await her, and this little piece of looking-glass which I bring to you will be her safeguard."

Then Mr. Thompson grew serious. "But why do you bring it to me?"

Then the old woman said, "Can you remember way back to your boyhood, when you were but twelve years old? You were poor then. Walking along on the street of this very village, you came upon a crowd of rough boys, who were throwing snowballs at an old woman making her way quietly along the street. You drove them all away and said a kind word to her. Do I look anything like that old woman?"

Then Mr. Thompson remembered that long-distant day, even to the color of the shawl and the sort of shoes which the woman wore. "Why, you are she!" he cried.

"Yes, yes!" cackled the old woman, "and I never forget favors. So, when your little girl grows to be twelve years old I want you to give her this glass, and if she uses it aright it will prove a blessing to her and you."

"But what can the glass do for her?" asked Mr. Thompson.

"I told you it was a magic looking-glass," she answered. "If she turns it so as to reflect the face of those near at hand, it will show what they really are instead of what they seem to be."

"How?" he asked, with more interest.

"If she turns it," explained she, "so as to reflect a face, it will show, not the usual face of that person, but the face of the animal which he or she most resembles. If the animal is a bad and treacherous one, then she may know that the person is bad and treacherous. If the animal is a noble and faithful one, she may know that the person is noble and faithful."

"Why, this is very strange!" he cried. "How can I believe you?"

She then lifted the mirror in her hand. "You might try it," she answered, and he reached eagerly forward to take it from her. "But wait one moment. You see, the mirror is very much stained and discolored. It has been used very many thousands of times since the ancient days of the world, and can be used but five times more. When it has given five more such reflections it will become so stained as to be of no further good. If you wish to waste one of the trials, call in one of your servants and see what kind of an animal it is that he or she most resembles. But I advise you to leave your little daughter all of those five trials for her own benefit. That will be better than to waste even one of them merely to satisfy your own curiosity."

"But it all sounds so strange!" said Mr. Thompson.

"Yes, I know it must sound strange to you," she answered, "but it can do your little daughter no harm to give her the mirror when she is twelve years old, and tell her what I have told you, even if it does not do what I have promised."

"That is true," said Mr. Thompson, "and I thank you."

Then the old woman rose to her feet. "Do not forget that serious dangers threaten your little daughter. Be sure to give the mirror to her on the morning of her twelfth birthday." Then Mr. Thompson stepped to the door and pushed a button to call a maid to show the old woman out, and in a few moments he sat alone in his room again, with the mirror laid face downwards in the drawer of his desk, thinking of the strange tale which had been told him.

Little Hilda Thompson grew to be a beautiful and noble girl. Every one loved her, but of course none so dearly as did her father and mother. Her father had forgotten about the mirror, not even having told his wife of it, never supposing for a moment that any danger could threaten his carefully guarded child.

But it so happened that the morning of her twelfth birthday Mr. Thompson had occasion to go to his desk and thoroughly examine all the papers inside of it. In the back of one of the drawers, covered with papers and dust, he found the broken piece of glass, and for a moment could not think how it came there. Then that evening twelve years ago, when the strange old woman had come to

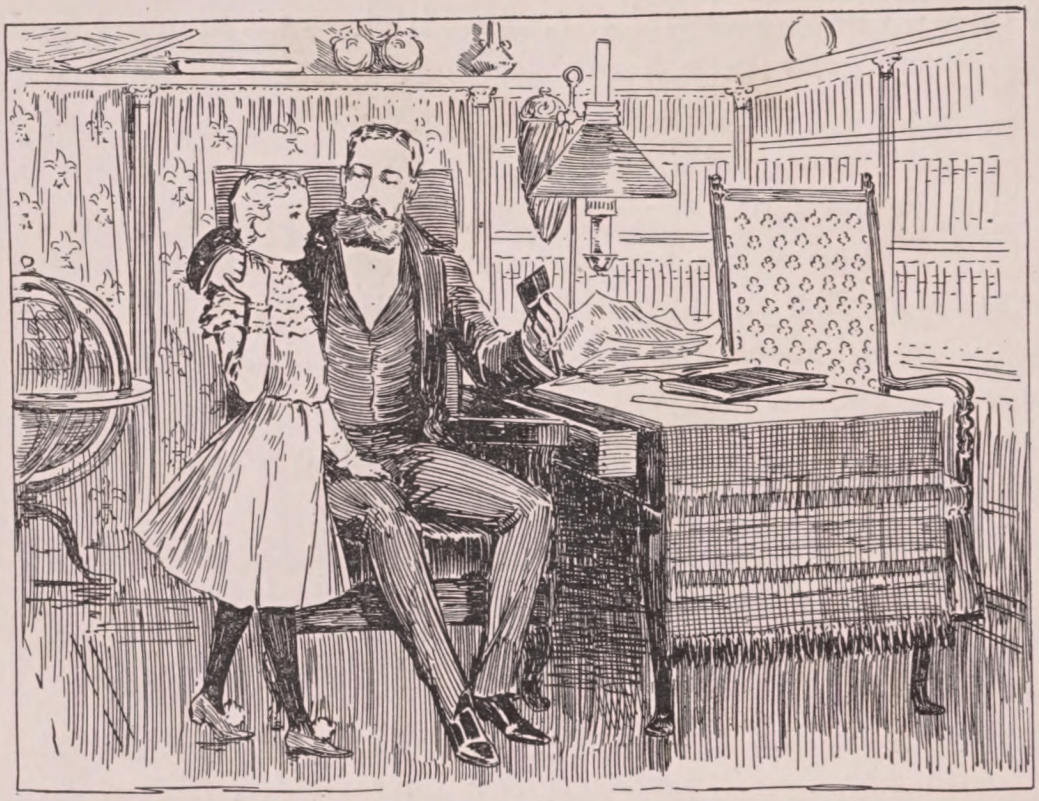
him with her wonderful tale, came back to his memory, and his heart grew very heavy as he remembered that it was now, as she had said, that the dangers were going to begin for his precious child. He had come upon the mirror in the very nick of time.

Mr. Thompson sent for his daughter at once, meanwhile wrapping the mirror very carefully in a piece of velvet. Very soon he heard the bounding steps of his child along the hall, the door burst open, and she came in like a beautiful little whirlwind, and climbed to her favorite place upon his knee. "What is it, papa? Do you want to ask me more about my party for to-night?" For Hilda was going to have a birthday party that night, to which she had been looking forward for many weeks. "What makes you look so sober, dear?"

"I have a little story to tell you, my darling," answered her father, stroking her long golden hair, which hung in curls, and looking sadly into her large blue eyes.

"Is it a sad story, papa, that you look so?"

"I will tell you," he answered. "Twelve years ago, as I was sitting in this room, the very night that you were born, my dear, a queer-looking little old woman came in to me, and left what she said was a magic mirror. She told me that it was for you, to be given to you when you were twelve years old, and that if you used it aright it would protect you from danger. It is the thought of that danger which makes me sad. The mirror, she said, could be used but five times before it would become so badly stained



Hilda's Birthday Present.

that you could see nothing more in it; so you must be very careful, my darling, how you use it. It shows the real character of people. If a person is good and true, or bad and false, the reflection in the mirror will be that of the animal which he or she is most like at heart."

"Oh! where is it, papa? Where is it?" she cried. "I want to try it." And her eyes danced with glee.

"No, no!" he said. "Remember I told you it could be used but five times, and you must not waste its virtue

for fun or curiosity, but use it only when you are very sure that it is necessary. If it is what she said, it will protect you from great dangers, for people are not always what they seem."

Then he took the magic mirror, wrapped in velvet, from the top of the desk. "It has lain in one of the drawers of my desk for twelve years, my dear, and I have just wrapped it in velvet, so that by no chance its virtue could be spoiled by accident."

"But do you believe such a fairy story, papa?" she asked.

"There is no harm in trying the glass," said her father. "But I will tell you, my darling, that many a person in the world would give all he possessed for a glass which would show, even once, the true character of some person."

So he put her down from his lap and handed her the broken piece of looking-glass, in its velvet covering.

It was only a few moments after his daughter had run out of the library, and gone to her little dainty chamber to put away her curious treasure, that a message came to Mr. Thompson, telling of the death of his brother, in a place not far away, and calling him and his wife to come at once. But the message explained that a child in the house had scarlet fever, so it would be best not to bring their little daughter with them. Mr. Thompson was very much astonished to receive such a message, as he did not know that his brother had been sick. But there was not a moment to lose if they were to catch the train, so, hastily telling his

wife of the sad news, he ordered the carriage, and they prepared to go.

There seemed no danger in leaving Hilda, since the governess, who thought everything of her, was to be there,

Left Alone in the House.

and all the men and women about the house loved her very dearly. Still, Hilda had never been separated from her father and mother, even for a single day, before, and, as she watched them drive away, the tears ran down her cheeks.

The whistle of the train which was to take her father and mother away had not yet sounded when another message came to the house, and this was for the governess, telling her that her sister in the village below had been taken very seriously sick.

"I will be back soon, my dear," she said. "Don't go out of the house while I am gone."

But with so many friends still close at hand, Hilda was not afraid, but going into her own little room, the windows of which opened to the front of the house, she took up her favorite book of fairy tales, and began to read.

Then, all of a sudden, from her window she saw great clouds of smoke rising from the stables, which lay to the north of the house, and flames darting out of the windows. She loved the horses, and was very much disturbed at their danger, and, calling to the butler, and to all of the servants in the house, told them to make haste and rush down to the stables to save the animals. So, strangely enough, it happened that within a very few minutes of the time when her father and mother had kissed her good-by on the front doorstep, Hilda was left all by herself in the great house.

Hilda was still sitting in her own little room at the front of the house when she heard the rumbling of a carriage on the driveway. It stopped at the door, and a man, alighting, rang the bell. For a moment the child forgot that there was no one in the house but herself, and waited for some one to go to the door and let him in. But soon the bell rang again, louder and longer than before, and she remembered that she

was alone in the house. So she stepped to the window, and, throwing it open, leaned out and called to the man below.

"What is it?"

"Let me in, quick!" he answered.

"But there is no one in the house but me," she said. "What do you want?"

"I can't talk here," said the man, looking up at her. "Just come to the door."

"You can tell me from there," she replied.

"The train with your father and mother on it has run off the track," he called up to her, "and your father is badly hurt. Your mother sent me to get you and bring you to him."

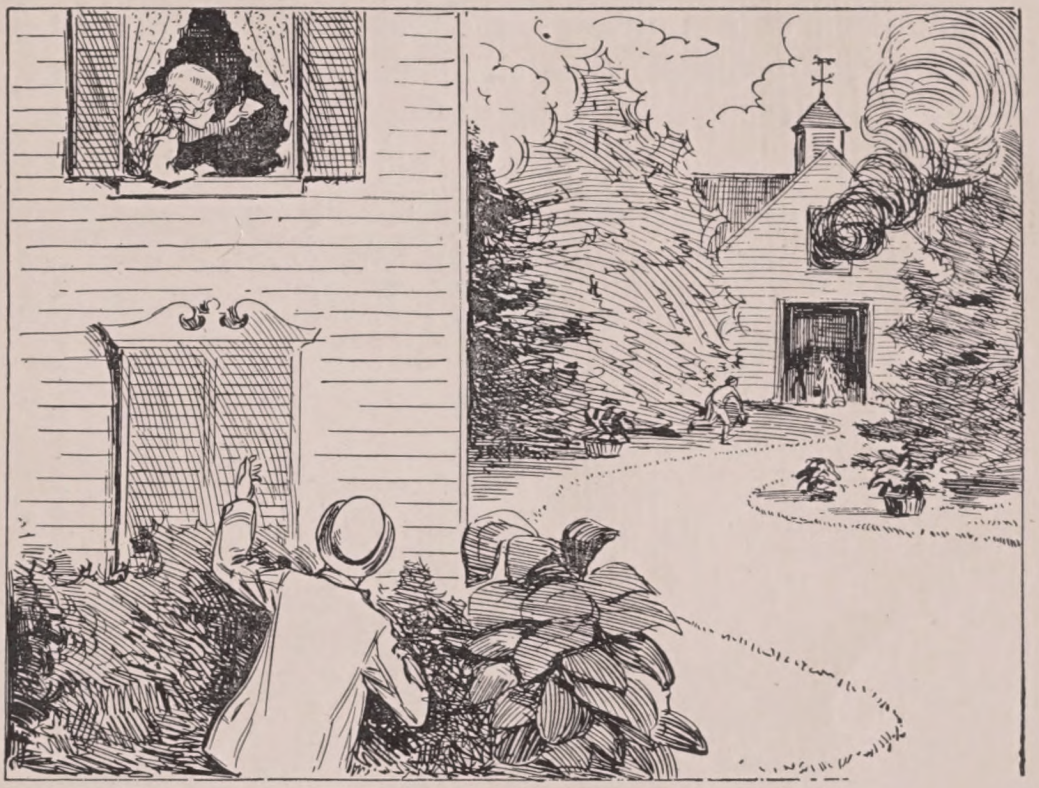
"Oh, that is terrible!" cried Hilda.

"Come at once," said the man. "There is no time to wait. I have a carriage waiting for you."

Then she thought of the wonderful mirror which her father had given to her that very morning — her poor father whom she was told was now so badly hurt. If the mirror was of any use this was surely the time to prove it. She would turn it toward this stranger and see whether he was a good or a bad man. She made haste to rush to her little bureau, and taking the piece of looking-glass from its velvet case, she leaned far out of the window and called to the stranger below.

"I am afraid to come down."

Then the man stood back farther on the porch, and



Hilda Tests Her Magic Mirror.

turned his face up to her. "Why are you afraid?" he asked. "I only came here for you because your mother sent me." He had a smooth voice, was well dressed, and carried a handsome cane in his hand. Then, drawing the broken piece of glass from the velvet, she held it so as to show his face, and looked carefully for the reflection. She was so frightened at what she saw that she almost dropped the glass to the ground below, for, instead of the face of a tall and handsome man, as he had looked, with the dress

and manners of a gentleman, the mirror showed a wolf on all fours, with a shaggy coat, and fierce, bloodshot eyes, and with open mouth showing long, sharp teeth.

"What is that in your hand?" he asked; but Hilda did not stop to answer. Drawing back quickly, she stood, fairly dancing on the floor, for a moment, as she wondered what to do next. She knew now that this was a bad, false man, and she suddenly thought that it had been part of his plan to call her father and mother away, and to send for her governess, and even to set fire to the stables, so that she should be left quite alone. No doubt he thought then it would be very easy to take her away, and perhaps she would never have seen her father and mother again if she had gone.

But what to do next? The smoke from the stables was still rising black in the air, and as far as she could look she could see no one coming toward the house. Then she remembered that, when the house was built, her father had put a bell in the tower, the rope of which hung down in one of the upper rooms. He had said it was to be rung only in case of fire, so as to let the village below know that help was required. It only took her a moment to run up the stairs, and, grasping the rope in both hands, she pulled with all her might and main. The bell was a very large one and gave out a sound so loud that it could be heard for a mile at least. She was not satisfied with ringing it once, but pulled the rope again and again, until she was almost made deaf by the sound. Then she stole softly into another room, and peeped out through the blinds to see if the stranger was still

there. He ran rapidly down the steps, leaped into the carriage; then the driver whipped his horses till they fairly galloped down the driveway toward the gate.

Hilda Rings the Alarm Bell.

It was only a few moments more before the servants came rushing in from the fire, wondering what terrible thing had happened to their little pet. Shortly afterwards the governess came from the village, and said that her sister had not been sick at all, and that she could not understand

how such a story had been brought to her. The governess had hardly finished her tale when Hilda's father and mother came in. It seems that they had met the brother, whom they thought was dead, at the station, and he was as well as ever. Then Hilda told her story, and her father understood it all. Some wicked men had planned to get everybody else away from the house, so that the child should be left alone, hoping then to be able to steal her away, knowing that Mr. Thompson would be only too willing to give all he had in the world to get her back again.

Very kind words were said that night of the old woman who had brought the magic mirror, which had been given to Hilda on the very morning when it was so much needed.

After that Mr. Thompson was more careful than ever of his daughter, giving positive orders that she should never be left alone. But as the weeks and the months went by no danger seemed to threaten her, and he began to forget how nearly they had come to losing her.

Hilda, however, could not forget what the magic mirror had done for her, and she always kept it with her in a little bag. She took it to walk and to drive; she took it to school, and on all her journeys.

Every night, when she went to bed, she placed the bag containing her precious piece of broken looking-glass on the stand within reach.

Often she was tempted to use the magic mirror in small matters. It would have told her which of her playmates

was most truthful and good, whether a new nurse or governess was what she seemed, or even helped her, when she visited the candy stores, to decide on the kind of chocolates or bonbons to buy. But she always remembered that the magic mirror could be used but four times more, and was wise enough to be saving of its virtue.

It was nearly a year after her twelfth birthday that Hilda, with her father and mother, was spending the summer at the seashore. The time had passed very pleasantly with driving, bathing, playing on the beach, and, most delightful of all, the sailing trips which they took almost every pleasant day. But, after all, Hilda thought the best of all would be the afternoon when the whole family set sail for a picnic on a little island a mile from the hotel.

The picnic lunch took place under some trees, a little way back from the beach of the island. The dining-table was a big flat rock, all decorated with the wild flowers which Hilda and her father had been gathering, while her mother with the maid was spreading the cloth and laying out fruits and dainties.

But no sooner had they eaten the delightful meal than Mr. Thompson began to look anxiously at the sky, which was rapidly clouding over. Then the wind began to rise, and to grow stronger every minute.

He hastily arose, and ran along the beach looking for the boat which had brought his party over. It was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps its owner had not thought they would want to return so soon. Two other boatmen, how-

ever, offered to take the party home, each one claiming that his boat was safe, while the other's was dangerous. Mr. Thompson did not know either of the men, nor which to trust. But the water between the island and the mainland, which had been so smooth a little while ago, was now white with tossing waves, rising higher from minute to minute.

There was no time to waste if they were to get safely across, and as to spending the night on the little island, without any protection from the coming rain, that was not to be thought of. Mrs. Thompson liked the boatman with the smooth face and the pleasant smile the better of the two, and Mr. Thompson himself thought his boat looked neater and more trim than the other.

"You would better hurry, sir," said the man, who began to look nervously at the sky and sea. "It will be risky to cross even now."

They were all following him to his boat when Hilda thought of her magic mirror. Who knows? It might save all their lives. Perhaps the smooth-looking man was not as trustworthy as the other. She opened her bag to take out the mirror.

"Hurry, my dear," urged her father. "There is not a minute to lose." But she had now drawn out her glass, and was holding it so as to reflect the face of the boatman, while the waves tossed higher than ever, and the wind almost tore the mirror from her hand. It showed the man as a grinning, foolish monkey. Mr. Thompson turned pale


Second Trial of the Magic Mirror.

at the proof of their narrow escape, and quickly called the other boatman.

In a minute more they were all in the other boat, and it was bravely breasting the waves, which seemed likely to sink it. But the boatman was skilful, and soon brought them safely to the other shore. Just as they were stepping out, with lightened hearts, they heard a loud shout from their friends, who had gathered anxiously at the dock to await them. Looking back, they saw the other boat, which they

would have taken but for the magic mirror, tip over as it was struck by a big wave, throwing the boatman into the sea. He was able to swim ashore, after a hard struggle for his life, but it was easy to see what would have happened to Hilda, her father and mother, and the faithful maid if they had been with him.

It was one afternoon early the coming winter, just as Hilda and her young friends had been dismissed from dancing-school, that a man came running up the stairs shouting "Fire, fire!" There were two stairways leading down from the high building where the school was held, and the frightened children did not know which one would be safer for them to take to reach the ground. At the head of one flight of stairs the smoke was gathering quite thick, while the other was clear. But who could tell how it might be lower down? The dancing-teacher stood at the top of the stairway which was not smoky, and urged the children to come that way. The hoarse shouts of the firemen and the pumping of the engines could be heard outside.

"Hurry," cried the dancing-master. "Come this way while there is time. Somebody told me this was the safe way to the ground." The excited children were about to obey him when Hilda thought of her magic mirror. In an instant she drew it out of the bag, which she always had with her, and held it so as to reflect the face of the dancing-master. It showed him as a silly parrot, the bird which only repeats what some silly person has told her. Hilda thrust the mirror back quickly into the bag again, and

catching her nearest friend by the hand, cried, "The other is the safe way," and rushed toward the smoky staircase, followed not only by the other children, but by the dancing-master himself.

Third Trial of the Magic Mirror.

Before they had gone down a dozen steps the smoke became less thick. When they had all reached the street in safety they looked back and saw that the hall into which the other stairs led was a mass of flames. So this time the magic mirror saved not only Hilda, but all her young friends.

Hilda's next great danger was of a very different kind. There was a new teacher in her school, who kept saying flattering things to the girl. One day she said Hilda was very, very pretty: her hair was so long and thick, her eyes were so large and soft, her lips so sweet. The next day the child was told how graceful she was, how well she walked and stood; the next day how very kind-hearted she was, much better to all her mates than they deserved or than they were to her. Another day the teacher told her how bright she was, the quickest of scholars, who learned her lessons without half trying. So, as was only natural, the child came to talk of herself most of the time when at home, and was in a fair way of being spoiled.

Mr. Thompson was very unhappy over the way things seemed to be going, being afraid that his daughter would grow up a vain, silly, and useless woman. But it was all for nothing that he tried his best to show her the mistake she was making in believing all the flattering words she might hear, until one lucky morning he bethought himself of the magic mirror.

"You always take the magic mirror to school, I suppose," he said.

"Yes, papa. But why do you speak of it?"

"Well, my dear," he replied, "you do not seem to trust me when I tell you that people who praise us do not always mean what they say. Why not put this teacher of yours to the test?"

"What do you mean, papa?" said Hilda, making ready to set out for school.

"Why, just this, my dear. The next time your new teacher begins to tell you how lovely or bright or good you are, hold up your magic mirror so as to reflect her face in it. So you will learn whether she is as sincere and true as she is pleasant to listen to."

Hilda was so sure that nobody could praise her without being good and true that she was very willing to put her teacher to the test.

"I'll do it," she answered gayly, as she ran off to school.

But when she came home at noon she was crying bitterly.

"What is the matter?" asked her father tenderly, as he took her in his arms.

So, between her sobs, Hilda told him how she had tried the magic mirror on the teacher who had done nothing but praise her, "and, what do you think, (sob) I saw her in the mirror as a fox. You remember the fable, (sob) about the fox who wanted the piece of cheese which the bird had in her mouth? (sob) The bird was perched on the branch of a tree, and the fox was on the ground below, looking up hungrily. You know the picture?"

"Yes," answered her father, hugging her a little closer, "and I have seen so many of such foxes, and of such foolish birds!"

"Then you remember that the cunning fox told the bird how sweet a voice she had — she was a hoarse, cracked-voiced old crow — and the silly thing opened her mouth to sing, and dropped the cheese for the sly fox. Well, (sob) my teacher, whom I had thought so nice, looked just like

The Magic Mirror Gives a Painful Lesson.

that fox in the picture." And Hilda, who had just learned the hardest and perhaps most useful lesson of her life, nestled her head against her father's loving shoulder, and cried as if her heart would break.

Soon afterwards colder weather came, and ice formed on the pond near Hilda's home, although in some places it was thin. One of her foolish playmates persuaded her to skate over a dangerous place. If Hilda had tried her magic mirror she would not have taken the risk. But perhaps she

was a little out of patience with it since her last painful lesson. The ice broke beneath her weight and she came near being drowned. As it was, she caught a severe cold, and in a few days a dreadful disease with a long name set in, and it was feared the child would not get well.

Her mother hardly left the sick-room day or night, and her father, being only in the way in the room, spent his days and nights waiting outside the door, afraid to look in the faces of those who came out lest he should read there the worst news.

At last the old family doctor said he could do nothing more to help the sick child, and two famous doctors were sent for from far away. The doctors had heard of each other, but had never met until in Hilda's sick-room. They were very different in appearance. One was tall and fat, with a full, ruddy face. When he talked he puffed out his cheeks, and, as he stood or walked about, his body bent forward in the middle like a bow. Certainly he looked much more important than the small, thin doctor, with the pale face and the stoop in his narrow shoulders.

The two doctors looked carefully at the sick child, and, when it came to talking over her case, did not think it necessary to go out, since she seemed to be so weak as not to notice what was said or done. Each had a medicine to suggest which he thought would save her, and each was sure that the medicine advised by the other would do more harm than good. After disputing for a few minutes, and getting more angry every minute, they called Mr. Thompson in from his

anxious seat just outside the door, to decide between them. He did not hesitate a moment, the fat, red-faced doctor looked so much wiser than the small doctor with the pale cheeks and the stooping shoulders.

"Well," said the small, pale doctor, taking up his hat to go, "then you have no more use for me. When you lose your child you will know whom to blame."

Just then Hilda opened her eyes, and seemed to be trying to say something. Her mother was bending over her in an instant to catch the feeble whisper, and then turned quickly to her husband, who asked what his dear little girl had said.

"She wants the magic mirror," she answered, hurriedly taking it from the bag which lay on the stand at her bedside. The big, red-faced doctor, curious to know what was going on, had drawn near while the thin white hands held up the stained piece of broken looking-glass.

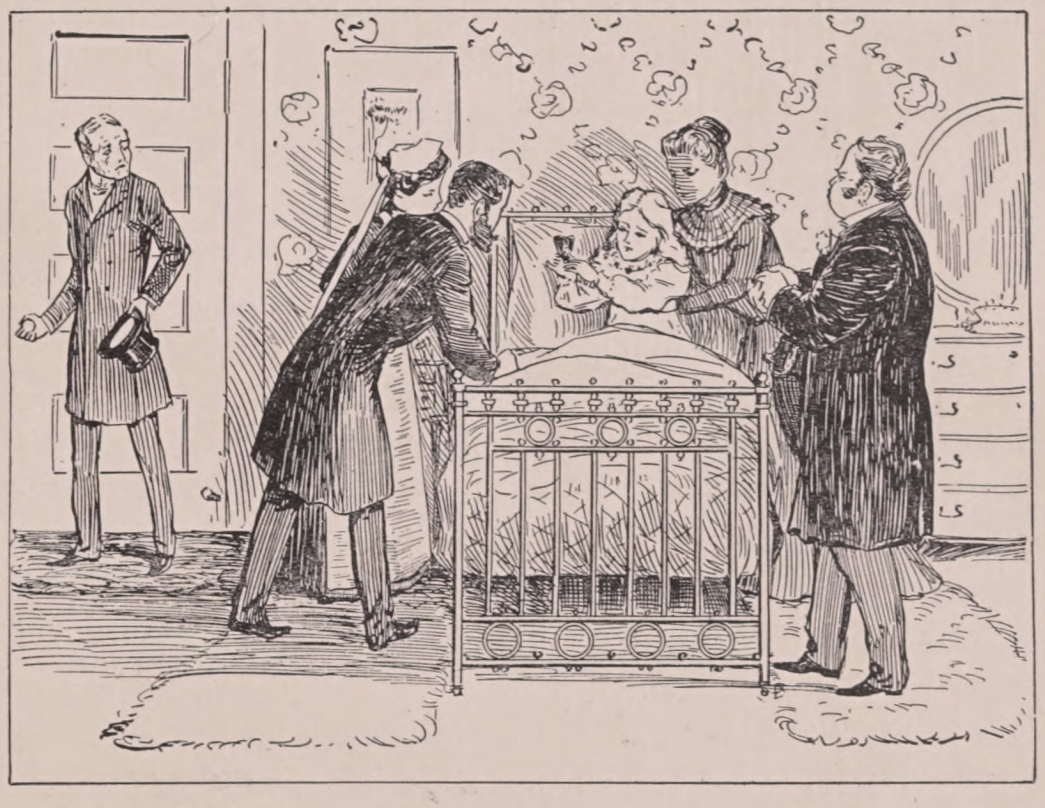
To Mr. Thompson's astonishment, the important appearing gentleman was reflected in the magic mirror as a stupid donkey, hardly any taller than a Shetland pony.

The effort exhausted the child's strength, and she sank back and closed her eyes again. But the magic mirror had done its work once more. The fat, wise-looking doctor was sent away, and the other stayed to care for the sick child, who was soon restored to perfect health.

When Hilda had grown quite well again her parents took her far away to a foreign land. There they stayed for some years and until Hilda had grown to be a woman. But

hardly a day passed that they did not speak of what a blessing the magic mirror had been, and think gratefully of the old woman who had made Hilda the gift.

When Hilda returned from foreign lands she had



Hilda Chooses between the Doctors.

reached the age when her parents began to think of her getting married. The house was gay with parties and dances, and young men came from far and near to try to win her for a bride. Some loved her for her beauty, others

for her sweetness, others pretended to love her, but only for the sake of her riches. No girl in the land had more real or pretended lovers.

Among all those who wanted to be her husband there were two, at the last, between whom she was to choose. Both were handsome, both were pleasing in manner, yet they were quite different, one having black hair and flashing black eyes, while the other had brown hair and blue eyes. The black-eyed man was the handsomer, and most of her friends thought she would choose him. Both had asked her hand, and the time had come, on the evening when her twenty-first birthday party filled the grand house with gay guests, that she was to give her answer. The hours were passing merrily away, and she seemed to be no nearer making up her mind as to which she should choose, when suddenly an idea came to her. Hastily leading her parents to one side into the very library where her father had sat the night she was born, she exclaimed:

"Have you forgotten all about the magic mirror?"

"Indeed, no!" answered her father. "How could we ever forget the dangers from which that broken piece of looking-glass saved our darling child?"

"Then you must remember it has been used but four times, and can be used once more. Perhaps it may save me from an even greater danger now. Why not try my two lovers with it, and see which is the truer and better man?"

"Why not, indeed?" echoed her mother eagerly.

How Hilda Chose a Husband.

"Run and get the mirror, and your father will call them into this room for the test."

When Hilda returned with the mirror in the little bag in which she had always kept it she found the two young men waiting in wonder as to what it could all mean. Mr. Thompson merely said: "Here is a curiosity. It is a strange sort of mirror which my daughter would like you to look at."

Still wondering, the two men took their places on either

side of her, as she held up the stained piece of looking-glass, and all three looked into it. It was still not so badly stained as to fail in its last task. Hilda was reflected as a lamb, the blue-eyed lover as a magnificent lion, the king of all animals, and the other young man as a skulking and cowardly jackal, watching the lamb with a hungry look, but trembling with fear of her protector, the noble lion.

This settled it. Mr. Thompson, with tears of happiness in his eyes, placed the hand of his daughter in that of the young man who had stood the test so well. Then they returned to the drawing-rooms, and, in the presence of the great company, it was announced that Hilda had chosen the husband which her parents most desired.

Their wedding was the grandest ever known in that country, and they lived happily ever after.